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Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

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07-56712 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 52: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*)

(a) International trade and development (*continued*) (A/62/15 (part I and Corr.1 and Corr.2, part II and Corr.1, part III and Corr.1, and part IV), A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/210 and A/62/266)

1. **Mr. Alahraf** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that international trade was the crucial engine of development, but that tariff protection by developed countries was obstructing the access of developing countries to markets. The developed countries needed to show flexibility to overcome the Doha Round impasse. There needed to be greater cohesion between trade and international fiscal policy. Unilateral sanctions were also an impediment to free trade and undermined international law.

2. Accession by developing countries to the World Trade Organization (WTO) should be facilitated, and he hoped that his own country's application, which had been submitted in 2004, would be accepted. Greater South-South cooperation was also needed to improve access to markets, encourage joint investment and diversify production. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had been helpful in that regard. His country was doing everything it could to encourage domestic economic growth and integrate into the global economy.

3. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that the liberalization of trade under the Doha Development Agenda could yield billions of dollars in gains that would largely accrue to developing countries. Nevertheless, simply opening a country to foreign trade was not enough: it must also have a coherent growth strategy. To overcome low productivity and lack of competitiveness, African enterprises must develop regional value chains that could then link into global supply chains. The international community should therefore assist regional economic commissions and other entities as they crafted policies and strategies aimed at helping the least developed countries integrate into the global economy. If the Doha Round did not reach a meaningful conclusion by the end of 2007, the negotiations might become much more complicated in the future. The developed countries must show the flexibility and political will necessary to break the current impasse.

4. Ethiopia's non-traditional exports had recently increased dramatically as a result of structural changes brought about by export diversification and import substitution. Foreign direct investment had also risen over the previous decade, partially owing to an incentive package to attract foreign and national investors to the export sector. Investment had increased significantly in horticulture, thus creating jobs for the rural poor, three quarters of whom were women.

5. His Government had also initiated the process of entry into WTO and was seeking to benefit from market access initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act of the United States and the European Union's Everything But Arms initiative. However, Government action alone could not achieve the expected results. A collective effort was required to create a mechanism through which developing countries could benefit from their comparative advantages and bring their products to international markets, without facing agricultural subsidies, tariffs and other trade barriers imposed by developed countries.

6. **Mr. Al Ajmi** (Kuwait) said that all markets should be open to the products of developing countries, which should also be able to participate in formulating global economic policies.

7. Since joining WTO in 1995, his Government had brought its economic and trade laws into line with the requirements for integration into the global economy. It had also launched ambitious projects concerning privatization, infrastructure and transportation, construction of new cities and investment in oil and energy and, through the Gulf Cooperation Council, was negotiating free trade agreements with various States.

8. The Millennium Development Goals were achievable, and many countries had made good progress. He called on the developed countries to fulfil their promises of development assistance, debt reduction and elimination of customs barriers to allow the products of developing countries to flow into their markets. The outcome would be an open and equitable financial and trade system under the WTO umbrella.

9. **Mr. Choi** Su-Young (Republic of Korea) said that the rapid economic growth of developing countries had led to a paradigm shift in the international system of trade. Private entities were playing a larger role as a consequence of privatization and deregulation, while developing countries were facing increasing non-tariff

barriers. The timely conclusion of the Doha Round would be crucial in dealing with that new situation. To achieve an even-handed outcome of the negotiations, rules and service sector issues should be addressed together with market access issues, under the "single undertaking" principle.

10. Free trade agreements could play a useful complementary role to the multilateral trading system, as long as they retained its norms and principles. The international community must take advantage of the proliferation of bilateral and regional agreements to further promote international trade and help the multilateral trading system to function more effectively.

11. His delegation strongly supported the Aid for Trade Initiative, which should focus on building the productive and technological capacities of recipients and thus enable them to profit from trading opportunities.

12. **Mr. Heaton** (Canada) said that the Doha Round needed strong leadership and the full engagement of all parties to deliver on its original promise of improving the prospects for economic growth and development, as well as poverty reduction, for the benefit of both developed and developing countries.

13. A General Assembly resolution should not attempt to tackle complex subjects that were under discussion by expert trade negotiators in another forum. Instead, a consensual agreement on a resolution that sent an overarching message of political support underlining the importance of the early and successful conclusion of the Round would be significant.

14. **Mr. Pokhrel** (Nepal) said that the credibility and relevance of the multilateral trading system depended on the successful conclusion of the Doha Round. Lack of progress in the negotiations had allowed poorer countries to become further marginalized. Both the Director-General of WTO and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD had underlined that the Doha development deal was "doable", and he hoped that such a deal would be reached soon.

15. It was alarming that the least developed countries had been unable to translate growth into poverty reduction or expand their share in world trade. A paradigm shift was required if trade was to help improve the standard of living in those countries. All their exports, including such products as textiles and garments, must be given duty-free and quota-free market access. They also needed resources to cover adjustment costs and ensure the smooth transition to a stable and competitive economy. Opportunities for trade in services, which offered prospects for human development, should also be pursued. While private-sector initiatives and the application of science and technology could help remove supply-side constraints, capacity-building and funding measures through aid for trade initiatives were also crucial if the least developed countries were to benefit from trade liberalization.

16. As a member of WTO and the South Asian Free Trade Area, Nepal had seen its volume of trade grow over the years. The country faced a widening trade deficit, however, as imports outstripped exports. His Government was focusing on economic diplomacy aimed at expanding and diversifying trade. It was also working to improve the investment climate, human resources, public-private partnerships, the private sector and customs procedures. Greater development cooperation from the international community would be crucial as the Government rebuilt Nepal's physical infrastructure and restructured its economy.

17. **Mr. Tommy** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that UNIDO support services to developing countries were helping them to develop their competitive production capacity, ensure that products met market standards, develop human resources to provide economic analysis and monitoring, participate in international trade negotiations and rationalize customs procedures. As the largest provider of technical assistance on trade within the United Nations system, UNIDO was part of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) working group whose task was to improve the coordination of such activities. The working group planned to publish a manual that would give resident coordinators details on all the programmes and services available.

18. UNIDO was working with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) on a programme of industrial modernization and restructuring in preparation for 2008, when accords on trade liberalization with the European Union would take effect. Similar regional programmes were under way in countries of the Mekong Basin and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

19. UNIDO helped countries to develop internationally recognized certification services and

was assisting African cotton producers to establish regional production standards, improve the quality of their product, strengthen their value-added processing capacity and export cotton and cotton by-products. It was also helping countries to attract foreign investment by improving their investment systems and creating alliances between developing countries and foreign companies. The promotion of South-South cooperation had become one of the main focuses of UNIDO work on technology transfer, which increasingly involved transfers from China and India to other developing countries.

20. In November 2007, UNIDO would hold a conference of industry and trade ministers from the least developed countries on the question: "How can aid for trade transform the least developed countries?"

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (A/62/343, A/62/356 and A/62/486; A/C.2/62/2; A/C.2/62/L.5)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/62/279)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/699-E/2007/8 and Add.1; A/62/320, A/62/340, A/62/371 and A/62/372)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/62/78-E/2007/62 and A/62/276)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/62/276; A/C.2/62/7)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/62/276)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (A/62/25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

21. **Ms. de Laurentis** (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to a note by the Secretariat on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forest (A/C.2/62/L.5), which was before the Committee for action at a later date under agenda item 54. At its resumed substantive session earlier that month, the Economic and Social Council had decided to recommend the draft resolution on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forest to the General Assembly for approval.

22. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/62/320), said that more people were threatened by natural hazards and extreme weather than at any other time in history, as exemplified by the massive floods across Asia and much of Africa in summer 2007. Central America, Viet Nam and Haiti were the latest countries to suffer. The link between climate change and the increased number and intensity of such extreme weather-related events seemed clear. In addition, sea level rise could increase the impact of some geological events, such as tsunamis, while heavy rains could trigger landslides and mudslides. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change itself had stated that such changes were already becoming evident in different parts of the world. As noted in the report (para. 4), urban settlements were a growing focus of disaster risk.

23. Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action was therefore more urgent than ever. Climate change discussions must emphasize adaptation — of which disaster risk reduction was a crucial part — and mitigation. The next major opportunity would be the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali in December.

24. He highlighted certain policies to reduce disaster risks described in the report. Despite those efforts, however, the world was not on track to achieve the Hyogo Framework proposed outcome of a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2015. Clear targets needed to be articulated at the global and national levels.

25. He drew attention to three noteworthy developments during the reporting period: the meeting in June 2007 of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery; and the development of new donor policies to increase funding for disaster risk reduction. His Office, supported by the World Bank, was about to launch a new study on the economic costs and benefits of investments in disaster risk reduction, which, it was hoped, would clearly demonstrate the value of such investments.

26. Noting that, currently, the Strategy secretariat was entirely funded through voluntary, extrabudgetary contributions and given the increasing importance of disaster risk reduction, he also drew attention to the Secretary-General's invitation to Member States to consider alternative methods of financing the Strategy secretariat, including through assessed contributions.

27. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems (A/62/340), which recommended the development of a globally comprehensive early warning system and proposed a set of specific actions towards building national people-centred early warning systems.

28. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) read out a statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

29. For the third time in four years, the Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded to individuals and organizations dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development, thereby reminding the international community of the broader value and contributions of sustainable development. The year 2007 also marked the twentieth anniversary of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (Brundtland Report), which had raised global awareness of sustainable development and illustrated the urgent need for a new paradigm for development. The concept of sustainable development had evolved into an overarching framework for promoting economic growth, advancing social development and protecting the environment.

30. The General Assembly had played a key role in nurturing and supporting sustainable development as a guide for United Nations activities. It also continued to play a key role in guiding global efforts to advance sustainable development.

31. He then introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/62/262), on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/62/279), on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/62/208) and on products harmful to health and the environment (A/62/78-E/2007/62).

32. Participants in the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had achieved near unanimity on industrial development and air pollution/atmosphere, and made significant progress on energy and climate change, including on access to energy and the transition to a low-carbon economy. However, they had remained divided on several issues, including time-bound targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Consequently, for the first time in its history, the Commission had concluded its session without reaching consensus.

33. In view of that situation, the international community must reaffirm its commitment to a strengthened Commission on Sustainable Development and to the important, if difficult, objective of achieving consensus on policy options and practical measures to advance sustainable development. The Commission should continue to strengthen such innovative activities as the Partnerships Fair, Learning Centre, participation of major groups, intersectoral dialogue between ministers and other decision makers, regional and thematic discussions, and the day dedicated to small island developing States, all of which had enriched its discussions. The Commission could not meet the challenges facing it without the unanimous support of all Member States.

34. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) welcomed the decision to invite eminent authorities on development and finance to participate in the Committee's debate. In the future, the Committee might wish to consider extending that invitation to experts on desertification, climate change and biological diversity.

35. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification faced two major challenges: turning the Convention into a systemic and worldwide response to global environmental issues affecting land and its ecosystems, including through linkages with its sister Rio Conventions, and translating political commitments into concrete actions. Since the Convention's adoption in 1994, the world had changed significantly. The market had become the driving force and climate change had gained momentum. New tragedies and new concepts were emerging, such as environmental refugees, and water and land as human rights and/or public commodities. The Convention could serve humanity by being an instrument not only for implementing sustainable development nationally and regionally, but also for tackling global environmental issues. That was the challenge facing stakeholders today.

36. Desertification and land degradation must be addressed urgently if countries were to adapt to climate change, mitigate its effects and strengthen their resilience. Indeed, combating desertification was a unique, integrated and synergetic way for countries to adapt to climate change. In order to have a systemic and worldwide response to desertification and land degradation, political commitments must be translated into concrete actions.

37. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and on the outcome of the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (A/62/276, annex II), which provided an update on activities undertaken under the Convention since the adoption of resolution 61/202 and in the context of resolution 58/211 on the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In that regard, he drew attention to the fifth session of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, at which seven panel discussions had covered regional and global issues as described in the thematic topics of decision 1/COP.5 and the strategic areas of decision 8/COP.4 (ibid., para. 7) and a global interactive dialogue had been convened on investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification (ibid., para. 9); the collaboration between the secretariats of the Convention and of the Commission on Sustainable Development in preparation for the latter's sixteenth session (ibid., para. 15), noting, in that regard, that the Conference of the Parties had directed the Convention secretariat to participate in the Commission's next cycle in order to ensure that the core issues covered by the Convention were duly considered; and, lastly, the outcome of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (ibid., para. 31).

38. The Secretary-General's report (A/62/276, annex II) should be considered in conjunction with the note by the Secretariat on the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018) (A/C.2/62/7), which had been issued at a later stage to reflect a key outcome of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Madrid in September 2007. That session had been a historical one in many aspects. After a decade of implementation, the Parties had recognized that a number of limiting factors had prevented optimal deployment of the Convention and had therefore adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework, to guide implementation over the next decade.

39. The Conference of the Parties had adopted a number of other key decisions with a view to removing most of the barriers to implementation, but had failed to reach consensus on the budget of the Convention secretariat. The Parties had therefore decided to convene an extraordinary session where they would consider the paragraph of the draft decision on the programme and budget for the biennium 2008-2009 relating to the level of increase in the Convention's budget for the biennium 2008-2009. That session would take place in New York on 26 November 2007.

40. Since taking office, he had been consulting colleagues on a road map to move forward the 10-year strategic plan and framework and discussing practical steps with other stakeholders, in particular the Global Mechanism. He also intended to organize a high-level policy dialogue in spring 2008 to foster awareness among relevant decision makers, and to use the next Commission on Sustainable Development cycle to harness support for the implementation of the strategic plan and framework. Desertification and land degradation affected the most vulnerable segments of society, hampering their efforts to improve their standard of living. The 10-year strategic plan could

make a difference and the international community must now help to implement it.

41. **Mr. Thorgeirsson** (Director, Sustainable Development Programme, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Nairobi, 2006, and its follow-up (A/62/276, annex I), said that there had been a sea change in the politics of climate change during 2007, particularly based on the scientific evidence contained in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and as a result of the momentum created by the recent High-level Event on Climate Change. It had become clear that climate change was a reality and that the cost of inaction would far outweigh the cost of early action.

42. The 2005 United Nations Climate Change Conference had identified key building blocks for a future climate change regime based on adaptation and mitigation, on the one hand, and technology and financing, on the other. However, the fourth assessment report had also driven home the urgent need for a comprehensive, enhanced and re-energized international response to climate change, complemented by national and regional efforts, for the post-2012 period. It would therefore be essential to adopt a road map in December 2007 at the Bali Climate Change Conference to prevent a gap between the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 and the entry into force of a new climate change regime. Moreover, a future climate change agreement must be in force by the end of 2012.

43. The High-level Event on Climate Change had sent a powerful signal to the world that the political will existed at the highest level to break with the past and to act decisively. Negotiations on a future climate change agreement should be comprehensive and inclusive, leading to a single multilateral framework. All other processes or initiatives should therefore be compatible with the processes involved in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and should facilitate the successful conclusion of the new agreement. To that end, it would be necessary to increase the number of meetings held over the forthcoming biennium, the additional costs of which should be borne by the Parties. The conference servicing costs for such meetings should come from the regular budget.

44. Ongoing challenges to be met prior to 2012 included measures to tackle deforestation in developing countries, movement from adaptation towards implementation, and efforts to render the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol operational. Work was also under way to provide a broader response to climate change within the United Nations system as a whole. In that connection, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had launched the Nairobi Framework, a collaborative effort by several agencies to build capacity in those developing countries that were not yet able to access the clean development mechanism.

45. **Mr. Jalbert** (Principal Officer, Division of Social, Economic and Legal Affairs, Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity) read out a statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention.

46. Introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/62/276, annex III), he said that cooperation had increased with other international organizations in recent months with a view to integrating biodiversity considerations into their regional programmes. Partnerships with other biodiversity-related conventions had been strengthened, as evidenced by the adoption of a joint work plan with the Ramsar Convention.

47. Biodiversity, climate change and desertification were closely interconnected. For that reason, the International Day for Biological Diversity had been celebrated in 2007 under the theme "Biodiversity and climate change". Two meetings of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions had been held in 2007 and a third meeting would be held in Bali in December. A joint contribution of the secretariats of the three Rio Conventions would subsequently be submitted to the respective meetings of the Conferences of the Parties.

48. At its twelfth meeting, in July 2007, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice had decided to progressively integrate advice concerning potential impacts of climate change on biodiversity into each programme of work of the Convention. It had also adopted a procedure for the introduction and consideration of such issues as biofuels in order to ensure timely advice regarding new developments of significance for biodiversity.

49. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing had met in October 2007 to continue negotiations on an international regime on access and benefit-sharing and would meet again in January 2008. The negotiations on the international regime would be completed before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2010. The Working Group on Traditional Knowledge was continuing its work on such issues as the elements of sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge and the development of a code of ethical conduct, which should ultimately contribute to the international regime on access and benefit-sharing.

50. He welcomed the fact that 143 countries had become parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which aimed to ensure the safe transfer of living modified organisms. Following the agreement reached on the issue of labelling at a meeting held in Curitiba in March 2006, work was progressing on the development of a liability regime under the Protocol.

51. Representatives from 21 cities worldwide had adopted the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity, which recognized the importance of urban governments in the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and reaffirmed their commitment to contributing to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its 2010 biodiversity target. As a follow-up measure, mayors from around the world were planning to form a Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity, to be presented in May 2008 at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity.

52. **Ms. Castaño** (Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) office at United Nations Headquarters in New York), introducing the report of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum (A/62/25), said that the fourth Global Environment Outlook report underlined the intricate links between human activities and the environment and, in that respect, the need for sustainable development. The various United Nations reports issued on climate change in 2007 had rightly created unprecedented public and political interest in environmental issues, which should create a strong impetus for a consensus to be reached at the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference. The participation in the session of six heads of United Nations agencies as well as representatives from international and non-governmental organizations encouraged UNEP to fulfil its commitment as the leading United Nations body on environmental issues.

53. The session had produced many recommendations for follow-up activities relating to, inter alia: the use of economic instruments to achieve sustainable development; guidance on the management of ecosystems; strengthening national capacity and technology transfer; promoting partnerships at all levels; and improving collaboration among multilateral environmental agreements. The ongoing United Nations reform process was widely seen as an opportunity to increase coordination among United Nations agencies and bodies, particularly in the environmental field. While the persistent lack of sufficient and predictable funding was regarded as greatly hampering UNEP in the fulfilment of its mandate, it had been stressed at the session that the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building would assist countries in addressing environmental challenges.

54. Some of the decisions on chemicals management adopted at the session were of particular relevance to the topics being discussed by the Committee. They covered such issues as the prevention of illegal international traffic, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and cooperation between UNEP, relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other organizations on waste management and on heavy metals. The session had highlighted the importance of implementing the Bali Strategic Plan and the need to further improve the proposed Environment Watch strategy. It had also requested the Executive Director to assist countries to integrate the objectives of multilateral environmental agreements into national sustainable development strategies; to continue to promote coordination across the United Nations system on environmental activities; to continue to provide UNEP support to the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, particularly through the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment; and to further enhance activities with small island developing States. Another notable decision adopted at the session was the recommendation to the General Assembly that it should declare the decade 2010-2020 as the United

Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification.

55. Her organization was engaged in internal management reforms in close consultation with the UNEP Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi. The previous months had in fact been pivotal in charting the course of action for UNEP in the coming years. At the request of the Governing Council, UNEP was preparing a medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013 in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The strategy would include programmatic priorities in the following areas: environmental leadership in the area of climate change; ecosystem management; hazardous substances; disaster and post-conflict response; resource efficiency; and environmental governance. UNEP had entered into a close alliance with the United Nations Development Programme to address the poverty-environment nexus. It had also begun to discuss the renewal and broadening of its memorandum of understanding in 2008 and had recently entered into a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

56. The tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum would be held from 20 to 22 February 2008 in the Principality of Monaco. The special session would address the issues of mobilizing finance to meet the climate change challenge and environmental governance. It would also consider the fourth Global Environment Outlook report and a draft of the medium-term strategy. The deliberations of the General Assembly would be crucial in creating and maintaining the momentum for change and in establishing a road map with clear and timely signposts in order to meet the challenges ahead.

57. **Mr. Omar** (Director, a.i., Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Liaison Office with the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development (A/62/292), said that mountains were globally important as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater and as repositories of rich biological diversity. They were, however, exceedingly fragile ecosystems and a disproportionate number of the world's most chronically undernourished people lived in mountain regions. Awareness of the importance of mountain ecosystems and communities had increased since the adoption of chapter 13 of Agenda 21, entitled "Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development", at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. However, despite that growing awareness and the many positive results achieved, a number of key challenges remained. Mountain ecosystems were still vulnerable to growing demands for water and other natural resources, expanding tourism, greater rates of out-migration, incidences of conflict and the pressures of industry, mining and agriculture. The report emphasized the need for higher levels of funding and investment in mountain areas, enhanced coordination and collaboration at all levels, and a stronger enabling environment with more supportive laws, policies and institutions.

58. FAO, which had served as the lead United Nations agency for the International Year of Mountains in 2002 and was the lead coordination agency for International Mountain Day, celebrated on 11 December every year, continued to help countries find solutions to their mountain-related problems. Much of the substantive work was being done by the countries themselves. It was through their vision, dynamism and initiatives that real change was taking place.

59. **Ms. Bilello** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Planet Earth (A/62/376), said that the Year would begin in January 2008 and would be launched at UNESCO headquarters in February. The key international event of the Year would be the International Geological Congress to be held in Oslo in August. Throughout the Year, UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences would work to raise public awareness of ways in which the Earth sciences contributed to sustainable socio-economic development.

60. **Mr. Inomata** (Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)) introduced the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Towards a United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Disaster Response and Reduction: Lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster" (A/62/699-E/2007/8 and Add.1). In January 2005, in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and the launching of the Hyogo Framework for Action adopted by the World Conference on Disaster

Reduction, the Joint Inspection Unit had decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the role of the United Nations system in disaster reduction and response. The decision had been based on established procedures of consultation on the selection of subjects with participating organizations under a provision of the JIU statute. The report had been submitted to the United Nations system agencies on 6 October 2006 and to the Economic and Social Council, and was submitted to the General Assembly under the agenda items being considered by the Committee.

61. The report contained 17 recommendations, 6 of them addressed to the General Assembly and 11 to the Chief Executives. The Secretary-General, on behalf of the Chief Executives Board, had concurred with most of the recommendations, including recommendations 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 12, which called for the preparation of a series of studies and proposals for consideration by the Economic and Social Council. Recommendation 12 was relevant to the Committee's discussion on the wish of the Secretary-General to review the current method of financing the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its activities and to consider alternative options including the use of assessed contributions (A/62/320, para. 80).

62. The JIU recommendations would provide a solution to long-standing problems inherent in the United Nations humanitarian system. The proposed establishment of a United Nations programme for humanitarian assistance for disaster response and reduction was justified in view of the magnitude of the resources and the diversity of the actors involved at different stages of disaster management and risk reduction, as well as the need to constitute a core critical mass capability of the United Nations Secretariat. The creation by the Economic and Social Council of an intergovernmental committee on disaster reduction response open to the main stakeholders and actors concerned was also justified. Only in such a forum could the governmental stakeholders establish the collective will, as a basis for the strategic management of the resources they would mobilize. The proposed intergovernmental committee would fully draw on the technical expertise and findings of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and take its decisions on the basis of their recommendations.

63. **Mr. Bilour** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said it was regrettable that at its fifteenth session the Commission on Sustainable Development had not been able to reach agreement on the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change. The Group of 77 and China attached high priority to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. The small island developing States, in particular, needed the support of the international community for their sustainable development efforts. Given that natural disasters were increasing in frequency and severity, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 must be fully implemented. It was important to examine the measures that needed to be taken to improve the response capacity of affected nations and the assistance that could be provided by the international community in that regard.

64. Climate change posed serious risks and challenges, particularly to developing countries. It was therefore important for all countries to work together in partnerships based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The momentum generated by the thematic debate convened by the President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the High-level Event on Climate Change should contribute to promoting a united response of the General Assembly to that important issue. The Committee's discussions should provide impetus and political support to the ongoing processes by promoting global consensus on climate change and contributing to a successful conclusion of the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference.

65. Desertification and land degradation posed a threat to sustainable development in general and to the environment in particular in many developing countries. Adequate and predictable resources should be made available to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It was regrettable that the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had not been concluded owing to lack of agreement on budget matters. Biodiversity could contribute significantly to poverty reduction; it was therefore extremely important for the negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing to be completed within the established time frame. The Group of 77 and China supported the UNEP Governing Council and the decisions adopted at its twenty-fourth session. They recognized the progress

made so far on the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, particularly through its Quick-Start Programme. The Group welcomed the recommendation of the Governing Council to declare 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, and hoped the recommendation would be endorsed by the General Assembly.

66. The Group of 77 and China would appreciate clarification of the reasons for the delay in issuing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution on the oil slick on Lebanese shores.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/62/SR.16

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 29 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

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07-56718 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

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(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (*continued*) (A/62/25 (Supp. No. 25))

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208 and A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Mr. El-Habr** (United Nations Environment Programme), replying to a question posed by the representative of Pakistan at the previous meeting on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that there had been two reasons for the delay in the distribution of the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/62/343). First, it had taken time to receive and collate the findings from various agencies, a measure that usefully provided up-to-date, objective information on the status of implementation of the resolution and covered social, economic and environmental issues. Second, additional time had been needed for further consultations with interested stakeholders in Lebanon. He apologized once again for the delay.

2. **Mr. Diarra** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting had recognized that the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, established in Barbados, had faltered. Sustainable development was far from attained, and, more than two years on, progress on implementation of the Programme was still slow; and yet small island developing States' achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depended on effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

3. According to the economic vulnerability index maintained by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), small island developing States were 34 per cent more economically vulnerable than other developing countries, largely owing to their exposure to natural disasters and the very limited range of their exports. Since the Mauritius International Meeting on Small Island Developing States, hurricanes, cyclones and tsunamis had ravaged small islands, serving as stark reminders of their vulnerability. Although the Mauritius Strategy addressed the issue of vulnerability and the need to build resilience to natural disasters in those States, most of them had neither the resources nor the capacity to evaluate risk relating to climate change, nor the ability to adapt to potential changes. International cooperation and partnerships were therefore critical to their success.

4. His Office was willing to cooperate on improving the frequency and efficiency of the meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group, whose purpose was to ensure that small island developing States' priority concerns were mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations family. Coordinated action by all actors was needed at the national, regional and global levels to ensure implementation of the wide-ranging Barbados Programme of Action, and intergovernmental regional organizations also played a pivotal role. The

outcomes of the Commission on Sustainable Development must result in meaningful assessments and decisions and recommendations that furthered action on the Mauritius Strategy.

5. Mobilization of support and resources for the Mauritius Strategy took place at different levels and through a variety of channels, including through the advocacy of his Office at multilateral forums and his direct high-level contacts with donors and other actors. His Office also urged donors to meet their international commitments, supported specific projects developed in partnerships with regional and other United Nations organizations and helped to identify and sensitize specific funding sources to the needs of small island developing States.

6. In 2007, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) had embarked on preparations to address the small island developing States' concerns at deliberations that would result in a post-2012 climate change regime. Adaptation, mitigation, technology and finance to address global warming and sea-level rise must be discussed at the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali, and at the proposed 2009 meeting to be held in Denmark on a post-Kyoto international agreement on climate change. His Office supported those preparations, as well as efforts to enhance national capacity and regional organizations and to obtain more appropriate responses and assistance for the advancement of small island developing States.

7. **Mr. Silvestre** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, said that a framework for stabilizing the Earth's atmosphere must be built on a shared conviction that the increase in global mean temperatures must be limited to a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, which meant reducing global emissions to one half the 1990 levels as a minimum by 2050.

8. The European Union had already made a firm independent commitment to reduce emissions by at least 20 per cent by 2020 and would commit to a 30 per cent reduction from 1990 levels, provided that other developed countries undertook to make comparable reductions and the more economically advanced developing countries contributed adequately. Adaptation was crucial and needed to be part of all relevant actors' investment policy decisions. Climate change must therefore be fully integrated into strategies for poverty reduction, development planning, and budgeting. The forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference afforded an ideal opportunity for transforming the current political momentum into deeds and for establishing a clear road map towards a multilateral, comprehensive, coherent and effective post-2012 regime by 2009.

9. The European Union was actively integrating its climate change and energy strategies by adopting clear and ambitious targets for renewable sources and energy efficiency, enshrined in the Energy Policy for Europe and in the Energy Action Plan for the period 2007-2009. Those goals, although challenging, were technologically feasible and economically affordable. Time-bound national and regional targets and commitments were essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. On the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Brundtland Report, it was encouraging to observe that the implementation of sustainable development principles and goals continued at all levels. The European Union was already preparing for the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure that future cycles led to clear, action-oriented outcomes in the pursuit of sustainable development. The European Union was working with its African partners to develop a joint strategic partnership to help Africa, which lagged behind in achievement of the Goals.

10. In view of the momentum provided by the eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa for the Parties' further commitment to reinforce the role of the Convention, the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) would steer the work ahead. Halting the loss of biodiversity was imperative for the European Union, and Portugal, as current President, would shortly host a high-level conference on business and biodiversity for business leaders, biodiversity experts, NGOs and policymakers to establish a reference framework for collaboration and interaction

for biodiversity conservation. The Union would pursue its constructive dialogue with all other parties for the finalization of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing well before the tenth Session of the Conference of the Parties.

11. The heterogeneity of high-altitude microhabitats made for unique mountain ecosystems. In addition to their often distinctive flora and fauna, they were a rare reserve of valuable minerals and water, with exceptional potential for forestry and agriculture development and management, as well as tourism and recreation. And yet most mountain regions were politically and economically marginalized and their populations clearly disadvantaged. Following the International Year of Mountains in 2002, the European Union had appealed for the continuation of efforts to increase global awareness of the importance of mountains and highlighted the importance of pro-poor policies for ensuring their sustainable development. It also supported strengthening the right of mountain women to resources and their role in their communities and culture, encouraging the development of further mountain-related national committees on equal access to resources for men and women.

12. The European Union reiterated its commitment to the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy and stressed the solidity and intensity of the age-old relationship between small island developing States and the Union. It would continue to support their endeavours to tackle the many threats and challenges they faced and to implement the Mauritius Strategy and attain the Millennium Development Goals. But those States must ensure that their problems were adequately reflected in the framework of EU-SIDS cooperation for 2007-2013. Given the risks that sea-level rise and climate change entailed for their sustainable development — indeed their very existence — the European Union was preparing appropriate strategies and promoting a global partnership alliance, with special emphasis on small island States and least developed countries.

13. He welcomed the increased focus on disaster risk reduction, in which connection the European Union supported the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, an effective tool for reducing vulnerability to natural hazards and mitigating the effects of climate change. In that regard, the new Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was the main forum of a strengthened International Strategies for Disaster Reduction system, while the results of the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems were commendable.

14. The European Union looked forward to further definition of the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in climate change issues and underscored the importance of the decisions on chemicals management taken at the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council. The Union also advocated broadening its financial base in the interests of coherence and effectiveness of international environmental policymaking and commended work already under way on a robust UNEP medium-term strategy for 2010-2013. He welcomed the ongoing informal consultative process on the international environmental governance system, which called for more ambitious reform and should transform UNEP into the United Nations Environment Organization.

15. The current year had witnessed a radical shift of the world's population from rural to predominantly urban areas and accentuated the role of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in helping Member States towards attainment of Goal 11 on slum upgrading and prevention. The complexity and urgency of the issue required the collaboration of all parties at all levels and renewed commitment to implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Union therefore welcomed the UN-Habitat Governing Council's adoption of the results-based Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013.

16. **Ms. Coye-Felson** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the region's economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being derived from natural resources, and its discrete ecosystems not only provided food, fresh water, fuels and other raw materials, but were also crucial to many livelihoods and helped maintain functions that provided defences against natural disasters and diseases. Accordingly, island biodiversity was critical to small island developing States. Climate posed the most serious challenges to the sustainable development of CARICOM countries, and the dire effects of the rising sea level and the sea surface temperature could devastate the Caribbean's isolated economies. It was therefore imperative to build resilience, especially in the most vulnerable developing

countries, by developing and transferring new technologies and reinvigorating and sustaining cooperation; that called for an integrated approach to development planning that took environmental risk into account. In that connection, she commended the European Union for its observations and thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP for their capacity-building initiatives in the region.

17. The Community also called for international support for its efforts to mainstream adaptation into development in order to address the region's extreme vulnerability to climate change through the provision of additional and predictable financial and technical resources, as well as support for the new programme on island biodiversity and for the project undertaken by the Caribbean Emergency Disaster Response Agency to enhance disaster management effectiveness by identifying innovative information and communication technology applications.

18. CARICOM appealed for the removal of barriers to the use of renewable energy, and for the promotion of its development and commercialization. It sought support for its regional programme and for the development of incentives and financing mechanisms for promoting renewable sources of energy as an integral part of sustainable development. CARICOM reiterated the calls for the full and effective implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and, more particularly, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, which were vital for addressing the sustainable development of small island and low-lying coastal developing countries. While the Community welcomed efforts to mainstream the Mauritius Strategy, it again urged the Secretary-General to implement the General Assembly mandate to strengthen the Small Island Developing States Unit so that it could adequately coordinate implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

19. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that climate change and desertification remained inextricably linked and had cost his country 50 per cent of its vegetation and 95 per cent of its tree cover during the previous millennium, a process that Iceland had gradually reversed. It was now channelling its experience into an international training programme on land restoration and soil conservation that had begun in 2007 with a course on soil conservation for experts from developing countries and, by 2008, would offer training in soil conservation, land restoration and sustainable development.

20. Improving energy services in developing countries was one means of eradicating poverty. The international community faced the challenge of finding a way to safeguard the world's ecosystems while raising the level of development and fostering economic growth. Over the long term, countries would have to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and substantially expand the consumption of renewables.

21. An enabling policy framework and leadership were required to promote the use of renewable energy sources, and the international financial institutions should be encouraged to raise the profile of renewables in their lending strategies. Geothermal energy and hydropower accounted for over 70 per cent of Iceland's primary energy consumption. His country had a long-standing commitment to international cooperation for the sustainable use of energy, and the Geothermal Training Programme of the United Nations University, hosted by Iceland, was valuable for sharing expertise with developing countries, while the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) was supporting the development of geothermal potential in Uganda and Nicaragua. More recently, Iceland had begun participating in the African Rift Geothermal Development Facility run by UNEP, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank.

22. Small island developing States were least responsible for, and yet most vulnerable to, climate change. Iceland, which shared many of their concerns regarding sustainable development, was committed to promoting the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. It had already spent over US $1.7 million on related projects and intended to organize two high-level forums in 2008 — one in the Caribbean and one in the Pacific — for officials, business leaders, scientists and university experts on Iceland's and small island developing States' approach to the sustainable use of natural resources. An Icelandic company was involved in a geothermal district heating project in China, and Reykjavik Energy Invest would be investing US $150 million in geothermal development in Africa over the next five years, starting in Djibouti.

23. **Mr. Pataki** (United States of America) said that although sustainable development was among the most important cross-cutting issues facing the global

community, successful development strategies also required education, the rule of law, human freedom and economic opportunity. The United States, which was a major economy and a major emitter of greenhouse gases, took the challenges of climate change and energy security seriously. The world must produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and must do so in a way that did not undermine economic growth or prevent nations from delivering greater prosperity for their people.

24. His country had recently hosted the inaugural Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change. The participants, the world's largest energy users, developed and developing countries alike, would strive to build a broader consensus on a new international approach to energy security and climate change in 2008 that would contribute to a global agreement by 2009 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. At the first meeting, the President of the United States had proposed the creation of a new international clean energy fund to help developing countries harness the power of clean energy technologies. The Major Economies Meeting was not intended to replace discussions of climate change within the United Nations, which had participated in the Meeting as a full partner. His country would continue to be an active participant in discussions of the issue in the United Nations. His delegation joined others in urging the Committee to restore the tradition of consensus in adopting the current session's resolution on protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind. Doing so would send a hopeful signal of unity to the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

25. Turning to the question of disaster reduction, he underscored the importance of incorporating disaster reduction strategies in all sustainable development plans. His delegation looked forward to receiving further information from the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction regarding its new modular work plan, which might make it easier for major donors to identify and support specific disaster reduction programmes. The United States would also welcome an update on the work of the new Programme Advisory Committee of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

26. UNEP continued to have a strong comparative advantage in such areas as environmental data collection, monitoring and assessment, chemicals and regional seas and coastal zone management. UNEP was working actively with UNDP and other bodies on the Poverty and Environment Initiative, and its participation in the United Nations Development Group and the revitalized Environment Management Group marked important progress in improving the delivery of sustainable development and environment programmes.

27. The existing system of multilateral environmental agreements reflected a good balance of coordination and decentralization, and his delegation remained firm in its view that the Committee should fully respect the independent legal status of the agreements.

28. **Mr. Duong Hoai Nam** (Viet Nam) said that natural disasters and other climate-related hazards had taken a vast toll, particularly in developing countries. Such disasters must be confronted on a global scale and in the context of the international development agenda, in the interest of devising a sustainable long-term solution to disaster risk reduction. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the convening in July 2007 of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. States must work together to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and integrate the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction into their national sustainable development plans in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, biofuel use, forest coverage, and the dissemination and transfer of clean and low-carbon technologies.

29. His delegation commended the Secretary-General for his determination to involve the entire United Nations system in the Organization's work on disaster reduction and climate change. The institutional pillars supporting disaster risk reduction must be strengthened further by reinforcing partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations and between the public and private sectors. The United Nations should play a leading role in making the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system a genuine multi-stakeholder vehicle for promoting and catalysing widespread engagement on disaster risk reduction and climate change issues, and for mobilizing commitment and providing international coordination and guidance to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. The establishment by the World

Bank of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery was a welcome step in that direction, but much more remained to be done. The United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction required additional resources to support country-level initiatives.

30. Viet Nam was in a region prone to natural hazards and his Government, recognizing that disaster could destroy decades of development gains literally overnight, had invested heavily in a variety of disaster reduction efforts. His country was also actively working with countries in the region and the United Nations specialized agencies to establish systems to monitor risk profiles and develop warning systems.

31. **Ms. Jahan** (Bangladesh) underscored the devastating impact of climate change, which severely impeded the efforts of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Bangladesh was particularly vulnerable to climate change owing to its location in a chronically flood-prone area, and it had adopted a comprehensive framework to operationalize climate risk management and mainstream climate change adaptation. The challenges of climate change must also be addressed more forcefully at the global, regional and subregional levels, inter alia, through forecasting, early warning and information-sharing mechanisms. There was a growing concern that an irreversible climatic shift would displace millions of people worldwide, including in Bangladesh. All nations had a responsibility to assist climate change refugees. In particular, steps should be taken to ensure that the post-Kyoto regime ensured that such refugees were granted the legal rights they would need to provide for their recovery and rehabilitation.

32. Drastic measures were needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and she deplored the remarkable lack of urgency regarding the issue that had prevailed for most of the past two decades. Climate concerns must be mainstreamed into development planning and a balance must be struck between mitigation and adaptation. All major emitters should collectively establish and implement a global target to stabilize the atmosphere over the short, medium and long terms. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be upheld, and the post-Kyoto regime must be based on more concrete, realistic and legally binding emissions reduction targets.

33. The clean development mechanism provided for in the Kyoto Protocol was not reaching all developing countries equally, in particular, the least developed countries. The launching of the Nairobi Framework to promote their participation in the mechanism was therefore a welcome initiative. In order to promote carbon-neutral economic growth, developed countries must commit to transferring environmentally friendly technologies on preferential terms on a scale that matched the evolving requirements of developing countries, especially the least developed countries. The post-Kyoto regime must generate new funds for that purpose on concessional terms to help countries to secure their energy requirements.

34. Developing countries also required sufficient targeted funding on affordable terms over the long term in order to be able to develop the capacity to adapt to climate change. The existing resource pool remained perennially inadequate. The full and effective operationalization of the Special Climate Change Fund under the Kyoto Protocol was critically important. Innovative financial instruments, such as weather derivatives to help vulnerable communities reduce their coping costs, would also be welcome. Current and post-Kyoto adaptation needs should be met with specific commitments and should not be financed at the expense of ODA. In addition, funding for climate adaptation should be fast-tracked and the principle of equity must be upheld so as to ensure that the most vulnerable countries received proportionately more resources earmarked for adaptation.

35. **Mr. Ngor** (Sudan) underscored the severity of desertification in many countries and welcomed the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. His delegation hoped that the forthcoming extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention would resolve the budget-related issues hindering the implementation of the Convention. Adequate and predictable funding was a major requirement to help developing countries combat desertification and build national capacity.

36. Soil degradation posed an imminent threat to domestic, regional and international stability by impeding poverty eradication efforts and creating competition for scarce resources. Moreover, as indicated in the Sudan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment prepared by UNEP, just as environmental

degradation could contribute to the triggering and perpetuation of conflict, the sustainable management of natural resources could provide the basis for long-term stability, sustainable livelihoods and development.

37. He cited many statistics that highlighted the negative impact of drought and desertification in his country over three decades. Sudan had adopted national plans to address those problems beginning in 1978. Moreover, it had been among the first countries to sign the Convention to Combat Desertification and was a founding member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which had been established in 1986 by six East African States in response to recurrent and severe drought and other natural disasters in the region. The most important lesson derived from the experience of IGAD was that drought and desertification could not be effectively dealt with in isolation from other economic, social and political dimensions in the countries or regions concerned and that regional and subregional organizations could play a significant role if they were supported by other international stakeholders.

38. **Mr. Pankin** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation had always been part of the international efforts led by the United Nations to implement Agenda 21, the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the relevant goals of the 2005 World Summit. Positive developments in the current year had included the proposal from Switzerland and Mexico, the co-chairs of the consultations on environmental governance, of a range of options for further actions for reforming the environmental sector with a description of each option and an assessment of the practical implementation needs under current conditions.

39. UNEP continued to play a key role in tackling pressing environmental problems, and the twenty-fourth session of its Governing Council had produced valuable results. The potential of UNEP was far from exhausted and in that context he welcomed the measures taken in the past year to optimize its structure. At the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, important decisions had been taken on the programme of work and the implementation of a non-legally binding instrument on forests of all types, which would take the international forest process to a qualitatively new level. The recent High-level Event on Climate Change had shown that there was political support for joint international efforts to counter climate change. The forthcoming session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Bali, would surely make a significant contribution to developing a road map for international cooperation on those issues after 2012. The Russian Federation was prepared to play an active role in that joint effort.

40. He welcomed the results of the recent session of the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The outcome of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had considered the issues of energy, climate change, industrial development and atmospheric pollution, had been disappointing. It had not been possible to find solutions politically acceptable to all countries and that sad lesson should be taken into account in the new cycle of meetings.

41. In relation to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the increase in the number and scale of natural disasters made international cooperation on disaster reduction even more important. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was an appropriate forum for continuing international cooperation on those issues. It was important to maintain the informal and non-politicized nature of the dialogue in the context of the Global Platform and effective working relations should be established between the Platform and the General Assembly. He supported the Secretary-General's recommendations on the need to integrate disaster reduction activities into the work of the United Nations development system, and particularly UNDP. He welcomed the establishment by the World Bank of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. The joint efforts of international cooperation partners and national governments would enhance consideration of the relevant issues in development programmes and would reduce the vulnerability of the planet's population.

42. **Mr. Llanio González Pérez** (Cuba) said that, notwithstanding the rapidly accelerating pace of global climate change and environmental degradation, the international community was still far from achieving its goal of ensuring environmental sustainability by 2015. He cited a number of statistics illustrating the extremely dire situation with respect to those crucial issues. There were no indications that the developed

countries had the intention or political will to honour their moral obligation and historical responsibility to take the lead in remedying the situation. Moreover, they failed to recognize the principle of common but differentiated responsibility or to adequately reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. The environmental crisis could not be solved by purchasing the emissions quotas of developing countries or, as proposed by the President of the United States, by promoting the use of biofuels. The latter course of action would seriously compromise world food security, distort commodity markets and cause further environmental degradation.

43. The developed countries must meet their international commitments particularly the Kyoto Protocol, without further delay. They must also honour their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of GNP to ODA. It was essential to foster genuine multilateral cooperation on the basis of the principles of solidarity, complementarity and mutual benefit, with a view to achieving the goals set out in Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals.

44. Special attention must be devoted to small island developing States, which were particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and lacked adequate safe water resources. It was essential to strengthen their ability to adapt to climate change, including by helping them with technology and human resources development and capacity-building.

45. **Mr. Ehouzou** (Benin) pointed out that desertification, particularly in Africa, worsened poverty, caused migration and increased food insecurity. When people lived in poverty, they had virtually no choice but to over-exploit the ground and when finally, the earth could no longer be worked profitably, they were often forced to leave their lands and migrate elsewhere. For Benin, the fight against desertification and the promotion of development were one and the same endeavour. Most households in Benin cooked and heated exclusively with wood, and recent studies indicated that that practice, combined with slash-and-burn farming, was stripping an average of 100,000 hectares of vegetation cover from the savannahs every year. It was expected that the vast quantities of carbon dioxide released would go on increasing in line with the rise in energy needs, itself resulting from the growth in the population. If energy production and agricultural practice were not changed, desertification would extend to the wooded savannahs and the carbon dioxide that they were holding would be released into the atmosphere as well.

46. His Government supported investments in the environmental sector, intended to increase its people's environmental awareness, to incorporate the environmental dimension into sectoral strategies and projects and to decentralize sustainable management of the environment. Benin could be regarded as a country with a moderate investment risk, having political stability and a strong national identity, a steady economy and competitive production costs. It was therefore confident that development partners would demonstrate their commitment to the Rio Principles by increasing their assistance to and investments in the countries of Africa and the least developed countries, such as Benin. Greater efforts were also needed in the areas of capacity-building and financial support to bring about adaptation to climate change, in particular through the development and transfer of clean technologies. In the short term, capacity-building should relate to implementation of an integrated early warning system for climatic variability and climate change, and enhancement of climate monitoring networks to allow ongoing updating of climate data.

47. The developed countries, including the United States of America, should offer concessions that would make it possible, over time, to adopt actual numerical commitments for the post-2012 reduction of greenhouse gases. The linkages between desertification and biodiversity on the one hand and climate change on the other should be studied with a view to finding ways to relieve the powerful pressures exerted upon the natural resources of the African countries by energy needs, agricultural activities and demographics.

48. National action plans for implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, and/or national plans for adaptation to climate change, had yet to become operational. That would require additional resources, in particular from the Global Environment Facility, on a scale sufficient to permit the developing countries to finance the implementation of the various environmental conventions and thereby to create conditions favourable to sustainable development in all its social, economic and environmental aspects.

49. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) suggested that protecting the environment meant more than defending it. It implied a more positive

vision of the human being, who was no longer a threat to the environment, but someone who held himself responsible for its care and management. Viewed in that way, there was no conflict between the human being and the environment, but, rather an inseparable alliance, in which the environment essentially conditioned man's life and development, while the human being perfected the environment by his or her creative activity.

50. At its core, the environmental crisis was a moral challenge, one that called upon mankind to examine how it used and shared the goods of the earth and what it passed on to future generations. It meant that mankind's ever-increasing power over nature must be accompanied by an equally growing responsibility for it. Issues of environmental protection, development models and social equity were inextricably intertwined, so that, for instance, while mankind sought to find the best way to combine environmental protection and sustainable development, it must also work for justice within societies and among nations. In most countries, it was the poor and powerless who most directly bore the brunt of environmental degradation, living in polluted lands or squatting on public ground without any access to basic services. Likewise, subsistence farmers cleared woodlands in order to survive, thereby perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation.

51. However, all was not gloom. There were encouraging signs of mankind's growing awareness of the interrelatedness of the challenges facing it. The predictions of disastrous consequences of climate change had brought home the urgency of caring for the environment. Environmental degradation caused by certain economic models had revealed to many that development was not achieved through a mere quantitative increase in production, but through a balanced approach including respect for the rights of workers and protection of the environment.

52. It was earnestly to be hoped that those positive signs could lead to a consolidated vision of human progress that was consistent with respect for nature, and to a greater international solidarity in which responsibility for environmental protection was equitably shared between the developed and the developing countries. It was incumbent upon authorities to translate those promising signs into public policies capable of reversing and preventing environmental decay, while pursuing the goal of sustainable development for all. But laws alone did not bring about behavioural change: it also required personal commitment and the ethical conviction of the value of solidarity. Achieving change demanded a more equitable relationship between rich and poor countries, and imposed special obligations on large-scale industrial structures, both in developed and in developing nations, to take measures for environmental protection.

53. **Ms. von Lilien-Waldau** (International Fund for Agricultural Development) noted that climate change was expected to increase the rate of desertification in coming years. With desertification and land degradation being both causes and consequences of rural poverty, the best way to protect natural resources was through rural development to lift poor farmers and herders out of hunger and poverty. Those farmers — 1.5 billion of the world's population who managed vast areas of the Earth's surface — played an important role in combating desertification and land degradation, and had to be part of the response to the challenge of mitigating climate change.

54. With the world preparing to take more definitive steps to address climate change, the existence of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the Convention, recently adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, was especially welcome. It was to be hoped that the plan would focus the attention of international donors on the issues of land degradation and would increase understanding in policymakers and the public that sound land management not only mitigated climate change but was one of the most effective ways to reduce rural poverty and increase development.

55. As part of broader resource mobilization in support of the implementation of the Convention, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had expanded its access to Global Environmental Facility (GEF) resources. In June 2007, the GEF Council had recognized that, in addition to sustainable land management, IFAD had developed the capacity to work in other GEF focal areas, such as biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. Following a recent review of the GEF focal areas, the inclusion of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the GEF climate change "window" opened interesting prospects for affected countries to mitigate the effects of climate change.

56. IFAD hoped that the Convention's Committee on Science and Technology would help to develop a better understanding of the links between LULUCF and carbon emissions savings and, in particular, which practices most benefited smallholder farmers, foresters and rural communities, with a view to linking those producers with carbon markets, which were in their early stages in developing countries. The sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development would provide an important opportunity for focusing coordinated attention on drought and desertification, and on the need to invest in sustainable agricultural practices, including sustainable land management.

57. As custodians of natural resources and vast areas of land and forests, poor rural people were key players in designing and implementing measures that curbed and reversed desertification. It was important to ensure that political leaders recognized that soil was the largest reservoir in the terrestrial carbon cycle and that poor rural farmers were therefore a critical part of the solution to the world's environmental crises.

58. **Mr. Aluteni** (Namibia) said that the challenge for his country was to manage its fragile ecology while taking measures to curb desertification, which had drastically increased vulnerability to frequent droughts that caused livestock losses and reduced grain production, threatening the livelihoods of poor farmers and rural communities in general. Additional challenges to the ecosystem were deforestation, overgrazing, deterioration of rangelands and bush encroachment, as well as the illegal harvesting of desert plants. To address those problems, his Government was promoting the sustainable and equitable development of natural resources for the benefit of both present and future generations. It promoted environmental sustainability through improved land use by supporting communal land boards and promoting land-based approaches to livelihood. Viewing research and training as key elements in the process of combating desertification, it had expended substantial resources on training in areas such as community-based natural resource management.

59. Even as it combated desertification, Namibia remained proud of the beauty of its deserts, which over the years had sustained numerous exotic species of fauna and flora, as well as providing opportunities for adventurous tourism. Namibia would never be the same without its deserts: indeed, without the Namib Desert, even the country's name would have no meaning.

60. While Namibia's geographical location and climate provided ample opportunities for it to become a leader in the sustainable use of new and renewable energy technologies, its small and scattered population made it unfeasible to establish conventional electricity supply networks across the country. Use of stand-alone new and renewable energy technologies was therefore a viable option for off-grid energy provision and a contribution to ensuring security of supply. Additionally, expanded use of renewable energy could help the country to realize the third pillar of sustainable development, namely environmental protection, as well as contribute to climate stabilization efforts through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

61. Lack of access to energy was a serious impediment to socio-economic development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. Currently, although Namibia had achieved about 70 per cent electrification in urban centres, the figure was only 15 per cent in rural areas. New and renewable energy sources in Namibia included 30,000 wind-driven water pumps, and solar technologies were being used for lighting, basic appliances, and water pumping and heating. The possibility of generating electricity through ocean wave technologies along the country's long coastline was also being explored.

62. One of the main challenges to the use of new and renewable sources of energy was the high initial investment required, since nearly all the equipment had to be imported. To address that challenge, the Government had established the Solar Revolving Fund. Through affordable microfinancing arrangements, the Fund enables low-income groups to acquire renewable energy technologies. Vocational training centres now included new and renewable energy training in their curricula, and a Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Institute had been established at the Polytechnic of Namibia to serve as an information hub.

63. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia) said that sustainable development was about holding the world in trust for future generations, which entailed a need to strengthen the economic, social and environmental pillars of development. For developing countries, achieving that objective remained one of the greatest challenges: it was extremely difficult to get people to live sustainably if their focus was to escape poverty, or even just to

survive. And the challenge had become even greater with the threat of climate change, which, according to the scientific evidence, would lead to more inequalities, in health care and in access to food and clean water.

64. While the Kyoto Protocol had been a good start, more aggressive measures based on common but differentiated responsibility were necessary, but taking them would demand political will. His delegation commended the initiative of the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in convening a thematic debate on climate change, and holding the High-level Event on Climate Change in September respectively. Yet there was still a long way to go. It was to be hoped that the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference would launch a new era in climate change, one of long-term political investment and long-term action. Action on climate change did not mean lowering people's quality of life, but it did require changing their way of life. An effective response must strike a balance between mitigation and adaptation. Developed countries should continue to take the lead in committing to ever greater emissions reductions. Greater international cooperation in technology and investment was also needed to support developing countries' transition to clean economies.

65. The tropical rainforest countries recognized that the fight against climate change would be lost if rainforests were also lost. Consequently, the President of Indonesia had convened a meeting of tropical rainforest countries during the High-level Event. That initiative had launched a collaborative effort to highlight the deforestation issue in the future climate change regime, while fully taking into account the economic and social needs of the rainforest countries.

66. Many countries had been facing the unforgiving forces of natural hazards for years, but vulnerability had been accentuated with the rising climatic risks, and the economic costs of disasters had severely constrained the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. In that context, stronger national capacities, investment in disaster risk reduction and predictable and stable financial resources for disaster reduction instruments would be more crucial than ever. However important it was to strive for the accelerated progress of international commitments such as those contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, it was also necessary to factor in the costs of combating climate change, which was more than just an environmental problem. It was a civilizational problem, and human civilization would be in peril if immediate action was not taken. The determination of all countries to address the adverse effects of climate change seriously had never been stronger: the momentum must not be wasted.

67. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that sustainable development was a challenge and a priority for countries such as hers with a wealth of natural resources. Although Colombia was a medium-sized country, its location between the tropics gave it such a variety of geographical areas and climates and profusion of water and forest resources that it was among the five most mega-diverse countries in the world, hosting about 10 per cent of existing biodiversity in terms of ecosystems and species.

68. Her country's domestic policies were designed to ensure the sustainable use and management of natural resources. Its environmental legislation was among the oldest in Latin America and included a national plan for sustainable forest management, a national system of protected areas and a national policy on biodiversity consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity. Substantial human and financial resources had been invested in environmental protection. Such commitments should receive greater recognition and support from the international community. Sustainable development presented challenges that could only be met through solidarity, and joint efforts in that field would benefit humanity as a whole.

69. Climate change had direct effects on the economic and social development of vulnerable countries such as Colombia, which could also play a role by taking voluntary mitigatory action. The Committee's discussions should promote major international support for the adaptation needs of developing countries and for discretionary mitigatory measures.

70. Another Colombian initiative deserving international recognition was the Forester Families Programme, which would soon include 80,000 families remunerated by the State to help protect 57.8 million hectares of tropical forest from deforestation and illicit drug cultivation. The Programme contributed to climate stabilization on a global scale and would require international financial support for its expansion. The issue of sustainable forest management

should be given greater visibility in international discussions on climate change. The negotiations to take place in Bali and the deliberations on a post-2012 regime would offer an ideal opportunity to reflect on that issue.

71. The resolution on the Convention on Biological Diversity should give a political boost to the international tasks still pending in that area. A clear message should be given to encourage the prompt negotiation of an international binding regime on access to genetic resources and the benefits deriving from their use. Benefit distribution should be emphasized rather than access regulation, which was mainly the competence of domestic legislations.

72. In relation to the international promotion of renewable energy sources, Colombia had made significant progress in promoting the sustainable production and use of bio-fuels from sugar cane and African palm tree crops. Those crops grew in savannah areas without causing deforestation or food security risks, thus maximizing their environmental and social and economic benefits.

73. Colombia was also interested in the discussions on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. States were responsible for protecting their populations and national efforts should be strengthened by intensifying bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Such cooperation should include technical and financial assistance and promote institutional capacity-building and the development of early warning systems in the countries.

74. Colombia was committed to environmental protection, economic development and social development as the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development, and would make the best use of existing forums, including the Commission on Sustainable Development. Despite the lack of tangible results at its fifteenth session, the Commission was still an appropriate forum for addressing the topic from a holistic perspective.

75. **Mr. Gass** (Switzerland) said that the inability of the Commission on Sustainable Development to adopt a final document at its fifteenth session despite two weeks of intense discussion and negotiation should serve as a warning for States to breathe new life into the Commission so that it could carry out its mandate.

76. He welcomed the progress made during the last session of the UNEP Governing Council, including the decision to create a working group to consider stricter voluntary measures and the use of existing or new international legal instruments in relation to mercury. The water policy and strategy adopted had emphasized the importance of ecosystems for integrated water resources management, and reference had been made for the first time to payment for ecosystem services as part of that management. Those innovative economic instruments would be increasingly important not only for the area of water management but also for biological diversity and climate issues.

77. The efforts made for international environmental governance should result in a strengthening of UNEP or a change in its statute. Participation could be made universal, in accordance with modalities yet to be defined, so that all States could submit proposals and be active in the work of the Programme. There was a gap between the global problems the international community was facing, such as climate change, and the capacity of existing institutions to resolve them. One important challenge was to strengthen climate governance and integrate it into existing processes, strategies and action plans.

78. In relation to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 had become a priority for a growing number of stakeholders. More efforts were needed to integrate disaster risk reduction, including ecosystems management and climate change adaptation, into sustainable development plans. Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 should receive more active support from the private sector and involve civil society, including community organizations more systematically. Member States should review the financing modalities for the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and allocate resources for that purpose from the regular budget.

79. As poverty was often more acute in mountain regions, those areas played a crucial role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and should be given higher priority in national, regional and global policymaking for sustainable development. Mountains were an important source of positive externalities such as biodiversity, flood and soil protection, water quality and supply, carbon sequestration, avalanche protection, fire protection, cultural landscapes, outdoor recreation

and cultural heritage. Pro-poor national and international policies and financing instruments should be elaborated and strengthened in order to compensate mountain populations for the provision of such externalities. It was also urgent to address the negative effects of global climate change on the fragile environment of mountain regions.

80. One of the growing challenges facing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was a decreasing level of political support, due partly to the lack of demonstrable progress on the ground and partly to the perception that its debates were polarized. The Convention had to focus on its own institutions in order to keep them effective, but should also examine its role within the international environmental governance system. With an agreed set of priorities at all levels, measurable indicators of progress and a renewed commitment by all parties, the Convention could generate increased benefits for States parties and local stakeholders. His delegation would continue to support implementation of the recently adopted ten-year strategic plan.

81. **Mr. Liu** Zhiyong (China) said that since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Member States had made great strides in coordinated economic development. The trend of global environmental degradation was yet to be reversed, however, and the lack of funding, technology and capacity of most developing countries remained the weakest link in global sustainable development. Both the efforts of developing countries and the vigorous reinforcement of international cooperation would be crucial to that end. In that connection, the international community should fulfil its commitments and provide developing countries with additional funds and environmentally friendly technologies. The role of the Commission on Sustainable Development — the only organ of the United Nations system mandated to consider economic, social and environmental issues in an integrated manner — should be enhanced to provide better policy guidance.

82. Small island developing States were still encountering special difficulties in their sustainable development efforts. Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy required the joint efforts of all countries. The international community should honour its commitments to help small island developing States to enhance capacity-building in line with their characteristics. The United Nations should continue its leading role in promoting the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Countries and the Small Island Developing States should mobilize more support and assistance for various forms of partnerships so as to help small island developing States to realize coordinated and sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

83. His Government was continuing and expanding its policy of assisting small island developing States with their sustainable development efforts. At the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum held in 2006, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao had announced that China would provide 3 billion yuan in loans to the Pacific Island countries over the next three years, which would help them to achieve the relevant goals of the Mauritius Strategy.

84. In recent years, the international community had focused increasingly on disaster reduction cooperation and had achieved considerable progress, including the designation of early warning for disasters as a priority in disaster reduction cooperation. The disaster reduction cooperation system with the United Nations at its core should be improved by adherence to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and the strengthening of scientific, technological and information exchanges. Disaster reduction should have long-term, stable and predictable core funding, and support for the Central Emergency Response Fund should be strengthened.

85. In relation to climate change, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be observed. The developed countries should meet their emissions reduction targets, and the developing countries should adopt positive measures to control their greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible. The basic framework set forth in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be maintained, and international cooperation in the field of climate change should be advanced. Funding assistance and technology transfer to the developing countries should be strengthened instead of only emphasizing the role of the market mechanism.

86. China attached great importance to the issue of climate change and environmental protection was a basic national policy. It had promulgated a series of

laws and regulations and formulated national climate change programmes. President Hu Jintao of China had recently emphasized the need to build an ecological civilization, the building of a resource-saving and environmentally friendly society would be a salient feature of the national development strategy for industrialization, thus contributing to protection of the global climate.

87. Following the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in March and September, respectively. The international community should take action to implement the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The developed countries should support the establishment of technology transfer mechanisms on the basis of mutual benefit. His delegation hoped that further progress on desertification would be made at the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

88. The role of UNEP should be strengthened and the reform effort should always be based on the overall framework of sustainable development in the context of United Nations reform in the economic, social and development fields.

89. New and renewable sources of energy played an important role in safeguarding energy security and sustainable development. The international community should adopt a new energy security concept of mutually beneficial cooperation and diversified forms of development, paying particular attention to strengthening cooperation in research and development of key energies such as renewable energy sources and hydrogen and nuclear energy. His Government had always paid great attention to the development and application of new and renewable sources of energy and its energy strategy gave priority to conservation, domestic sources and diversified forms of development. Cooperation with energy producers and consumers would be strengthened according to the principles of equality and mutual benefit in order to maintain sustainable development.

90. **Mr. Razali** (Malaysia) noted that despite the progress made in past years in pursuing sustainable development, the hoped-for integration of environmental issues to development had not yet taken place. Instead, the environment had been deteriorating owing to global warming, biodiversity loss, water crises, hazardous technologies and worsening desertification while unsustainable consumption continued unabated. He welcomed the Secretary-General's call on Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups to continue expediting progress with the sustainable development agenda by exchanging lessons learned and best practices as well as by integrating environmental concerns into the overall development process.

91. Greater commitment by the international community, at the highest political level, and stronger North-South partnerships would be vital to the accelerated implementation of Agenda 21 and the promotion of sustainable development. There was an unprecedented momentum in the struggle to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and the quest for sustainable development was a closely related issue. The success of the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali in December 2007 would reflect that determination to address climate change and sustainable development issues. The outcome of the Bali Conference should maintain the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. A post-2012 agreement would have to build upon the architecture and other fundamentals of the Kyoto Protocol and include absolute emission reduction targets for developed countries, expanded mechanisms to facilitate contributions from developing countries and special provisions for the least developed countries and small island developing States. Any national or regional initiatives to deal with climate change should not compete with but rather complement the negotiations under the United Nations Framework.

92. With regard to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, a majority of developing countries lacked the capacity and financial resources needed to minimize the impact of disasters on the local population. The relevant United Nations organizations should step up their efforts and their cooperation with Member States in order to ensure that international engagement in disaster management was sustained in the long term and that member countries were prepared to deal promptly with emergencies and natural disasters.

93. The growing exploitation of biologically diverse resources meant that serious attention should be given

to the issue of environmental conservation. Developed countries should provide funds and facilitate technology transfer to enable developing countries to make substantial progress in addressing the loss of biological diversity. Developed countries and the Global Environment Facility should take a more proactive role in providing funding for capacity-building in accordance with the priority needs of developing countries and in supporting their efforts to ratify and implement the Biosafety Protocol. Countries with abundant biodiversity resources and those with the necessary financial means, scientific knowledge and technological expertise should cooperate to develop an equitable solution for tackling bio-piracy.

94. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification enabled Governments to review action programmes regularly by tapping into the experiences of other Member States. Desertification could only be reversed by far-reaching changes at both the local and international levels. The countries affected should continue to receive assistance to implement programmes leading to sustainable land use.

95. He called for enhanced coordination between UNEP and other United Nations agencies and the various multilateral environment agreements, and for concerted efforts by all environmental and environment-related agencies to exchange and share their information and know-how in order to lessen duplication and make more efficient use of resources. A strengthened UNEP could be a central coordinating mechanism for United Nations leadership in assessing the state of the global environment and a forum for contemplating methods to avoid or reduce global environmental risk and elaborating joint norms for sustainable development.

96. As a developing country, Malaysia's growth was highly energy-dependent. While the demand for fossil fuel continued in key energy-consuming sectors, there was a need to plan for a long-term and flexible energy supply strategy, and especially for the development of new and renewable energy sources. Malaysia would promote the use of renewable energy for power generation by industries. It already planned to use biofuel in the transportation sector in order to reduce its dependence on petroleum. Malaysia would also encourage more research and development activities on renewable energy in order to strengthen economic growth and diversify fuel sources. Local, national and international efforts should be increased in order to ensure that renewable energy was included in the quest for sustainable development. States should continue to raise awareness, develop capacity-building and mobilize the necessary means of implementation, including financial resources, technology transfer and investment, in order to ensure that renewable energy played a significant role in the sustainable development process as well as the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions. Sustainable development had to be integrated into all economic activities if the planet's resources were to continue to meet the needs of present and future generations.

97. **Mr. Amin-Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, at the halfway point to the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it was important to take stock of the progress made thus far in order to expedite collective efforts to reach the Goals and targets in a timely manner. As the various Goals were clearly interrelated and the three pillars of sustainable development were mutually reinforcing and complementary, they should be treated in a balanced and equal manner.

98. According to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2007, progress had been made towards achieving some of the Goals, while others needed further attention. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty had fallen since the period 1990-2004. More children were in school in the developing countries and primary enrolment had risen from 80 per cent in 1991 to 88 per cent in 2005. Women's political participation had been growing, albeit slowly. Child mortality had declined globally. The efforts to control malaria had been expanded and the tuberculosis epidemic appeared to be on the verge of decline. Yet progress was not fast enough to reach the targets by 2015.

99. The lack of adequate progress in certain areas in the past year was a source of great concern. Over half a million women still died each year from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The number of AIDS deaths worldwide had increased to 2.9 million in 2006, and preventive measures were failing to keep pace with the growth of the epidemic. In the run-up to the International Year of Sanitation, half the population of developing countries lacked basic sanitation. If existing trends continued, the world would miss the target by almost 600 million people. Most economies had failed to provide employment

opportunities to their youth, who were more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.

100. The report also referred to disparities within countries, where certain population groups, especially those in rural areas, children of mothers with no formal education and the poorest households, were not making enough progress to meet the targets. The decline in ODA in 2006 would adversely affect developing countries' efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Proper attention should be given to the realization of Goal 8 on developing a global partnership for development.

101. In the past year, his country had participated in several rounds of negotiations on reform of the United Nations in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system, based on the 2005 World Summit Outcome. There had been a very sensitive debate on "system-wide coherence" and "strengthening environmental activities". Yet greater enthusiasm and vigilance would be needed in order to ensure that the outcome would help all United Nations entities to work more efficiently and effectively.

102. It was regrettable that the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in May 2007, had failed to reach a consensus on policy options and practical measures on energy, industrial development, climate change and air/atmosphere pollution. The adoption of policies and practical measures on those themes could facilitate the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The forthcoming sessions of the Commission should enjoy more cooperation and flexibility, especially on the part of the developed countries, in order to avoid the bitter experience of the fifteenth session. The topics on the agenda of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, namely, agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification, were of great importance. They were key elements for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and thus required adequate attention from the international community.

103. UNEP had an important role to play as the principal United Nations body in the field of environment. He emphasized the overall objective of that programme and acknowledged its contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed goal on environmental sustainability. Referring to the report on the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council, he commended the progress achieved in the Programme's normative and analytical work for the management of chemicals and in particular mercury. He welcomed the Governing Council's recommendation to declare 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building required further attention; the international community, particularly the developed countries, should provide financial and technical assistance to UNEP for its full and timely implementation.

104. The recent High-level Event on Climate Change had provided an important opportunity for the international community to exchange views. Any solution to tackling the problem of climate change should not impede economic and social development in developing countries. His country was prepared to take an active role in the negotiations to be held in December in Bali. The industrialized nations should accept the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. They should also assist the developing countries technically and financially with the formulation and implementation of their adaptation and mitigation policies in the post-Kyoto era.

105. He welcomed the outcome of the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in April 2007, at which the Forum's multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015 and a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests had been adopted. Those two decisions constituted remarkable progress in the sustainable management of forests across the globe.

106. He welcomed the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The extraordinary session of the Conference to be held in November 2007 in New York should take into account the need for additional resources for activities to combat desertification when adopting its future programme and budget.

107. Lastly, disaster risk reduction and building the resilience of communities and nations to disasters should be highlighted on the agenda of the international community. The first session of the

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in June in Geneva, had provided another opportunity for stakeholders to exchange views on progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action and identifying priorities for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system for 2008-2009. All natural disasters, including geophysical and hydrological ones, should be treated in a balanced manner in that Strategy.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/62/SR.17

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Summary record of the 17th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 30 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Sandoval (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guatemala)

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07-56993 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Lintonen (Finland), Ms. Sandoval (Guatemala), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/62/343, A/62/356 and A/62/486; A/C.2/62/2; A/C.2/62/L.5)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/62/279)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/61/699-E/2007/8 and Add.1; A/62/320, A/62/340, A/62/371 and A/62/372)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/62/78-E/2007/62 and A/62/276)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/62/276; A/C.2/62/7)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/62/276)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (*continued*) (A/62/25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Mr. Prasartkul** (Thailand) said that his Government was trying to keep up with the demands of globalization while practising moderation in consumption and shielding the economy from the impact of adverse internal and external changes. Under its policy of fostering economic sufficiency, it promoted agricultural practices that would ensure food security, as well as forest conservation, sustainable energy development and prudence in financial practices. The mechanisms envisaged in the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be implemented with due regard for the needs of developing countries. The clean development mechanism was not about foreign direct investment, but about technology transfer and capacity-building; it therefore required a collaborative effort between the developed and the developing worlds.

2. The Asian tsunami of 2004 had taught his country that preventive measures, including early warning systems and knowledge-building, were vital. Thailand had contributed US$ 10 million to the multi-donor voluntary trust fund for tsunami early warning arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, or Tsunami Regional Trust Fund. His delegation thanked the Swedish Government for its donation of an additional US$ 2.5 million for the Fund. New and renewable energy sources such as biofuels, together with the practice of energy efficiency, must be explored. Technology transfer involving sustainable and clean energy must be strongly promoted, without any hidden agendas or barriers to the access of developing countries. Thanks to the clean development mechanism, Thailand had been able to implement a number of projects, including those that would transform agricultural waste and by-products into alternative energy sources.

3. **Mr. Abu Assamen** (Jordan) said that his country was committed to protecting biodiversity, and had set aside natural reserves throughout the country to protect different ecosystems. It had adopted a national energy efficiency strategy that was aimed at achieving sustainable economic development and reducing harm to the environment through increased reliance on renewable energy technologies. A national energy research centre had been established.

4. **Mr. Shinyo** (Japan) said that a post-2012 framework must have the participation of all emitters and must promote both environmental protection and economic growth. Countries must begin immediately to adapt to climate change. It was especially important to take action in the areas of disaster risk reduction and preparedness. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 provided useful guidelines. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction would be useful in promoting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Japan would create a new financial mechanism to support developing countries that stood

ready to coordinate their policies actively in response to Japan's proposal. Special attention would be paid to developing countries and, in particular, those that were exposed to dangers such as submersion of land and desertification as a result of emissions by other countries. Minimizing emissions from deforestation was vitally important for mitigation. Adequate land-use management should be promoted, and initiatives such as the non-legally binding agreement on all types of forests, adopted at the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, needed to be implemented appropriately. Japan was also willing to cooperate in the fight against illegal logging and to address the issue of deforestation at the upcoming session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Bali.

5. International environmental governance was crucial to efforts to effectively address environmental problems. Japan appreciated all the work being done by the co-chairs for the informal consultations on international environmental governance and would continue to join in constructive discussions on the most effective mechanism for advancing the Organization's environmental activities. Recalling that 2008 had been declared the International Year of Sanitation, he stressed the need for more concerted and global action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

6. In March 2006, Japan had announced its Action Plan for the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). He encouraged Member States to take advantage of the Decade to promote education and public awareness for sustainable development.

7. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) said that Kenya was committed to ensuring that the principles of sustainable development guided the formulation of sector-specific plans and strategies. It was unfortunate that the Commission on Sustainable Development had been unable to reach agreement on the thematic cluster of issues on its agenda for the fifteenth session. His delegation hoped that the Commission's discussions on the next thematic cluster would be more productive. Kenya looked forward to a successful outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference to be held in December. A successful outcome must include an adaptation strategy with stable funding specifically for the most vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa. His delegation was concerned that implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was not being accorded the seriousness it deserved. He hoped the Conference of the Parties would endorse the budget for the biennium 2008-2009 at its first extraordinary session, since it had not reached agreement at its eighth regular session.

8. Kenya was deeply concerned at the continued loss of biological diversity and called for the urgent conclusion of negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources and their derivatives. Kenya welcomed the report of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular, decision 24/5 on waste management, and requested the Secretariat, in consultation with others, to identify aspects of waste management for consideration at the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The financial resource base of the United Nations Environment Programme must be increased.

9. **Mr. Riofrio** (Ecuador), noting with satisfaction the outcome of the High-level Event on Climate Change, stressed the importance of international technical and financial cooperation to develop national capacities to reduce the risk of natural disasters through sustainable development. The first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva in June 2007, represented a step forward in coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders. It was essential to guarantee adequate financial support for follow-up of the Hyogo Framework for Action and for the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Ecuador was particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and was firmly committed to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework.

10. **Mr. Thapaliya** (Nepal) said that poor mountain communities were particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and required special attention in that regard. Adequate funding should be provided for environmental services and investment in public rural infrastructure in mountain regions. Development programmes that would directly benefit poor mountain people should be promoted. The success of mountain development activities was contingent on combined and coordinated development collaboration among all stakeholders, including the mountain communities. His

delegation was encouraged by the international collaborative efforts and multi-stakeholder approach of the Mountain Partnership in promoting knowledge management, exchange of experiences and response to specific needs of mountain communities. It also appreciated the work of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in promoting research, capacity-building and gender focus for the sustainable livelihood of mountain people across the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region. Such regional and transboundary cooperation should be fostered so as to improve policy coordination, facilitate research and information analysis, and bolster joint action to respond to real needs. Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 rightly underlined the need for focused and urgent attention to sustainable mountain development. Similarly, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in paragraph 42 highlighted the importance of implementing programmes to promote sustainable livelihoods and diversification of mountain resources.

11. In Nepal, three quarters of the land was mountainous. The Government had adopted development policies and plans aimed at protecting the natural environment and the rich biodiversity of the country. The role of local communities in environmental conservation had been encouraged, and emphasis was also placed on the promotion of employment, environmentally friendly development activities, environmental education and public and private initiatives boosting awareness and promoting biodiversity and inclusive development.

12. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that good environmental stewardship meant that the rising standards of living of the present generation could not be attained at the expense of the quality of life of future generations. The devastating effects of global warming were being felt in poor countries, whose agricultural production was suffering as a result. Nor was the developed world protected from those effects, whose acceleration in recent years was of grave concern.

13. In Ethiopia, climate change was causing severe weather variability, loss of pastoral land, droughts, soil erosion, sedimentation of dams and shifts in agro-climatic zones. To reverse environmental degradation and fight poverty at the same time, his Government had adopted a comprehensive environmental policy, created regional agencies and developed strategies aimed at combating desertification and protecting biodiversity. It had also developed an environmental and social management framework and was implementing a sustainable dry land management programme in 81 drought-prone districts. Additional human resources, information and funding were needed to continue with those efforts.

14. The reviews of Agenda 21 and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development had revealed little progress in implementing the sustainable development agenda, especially in Africa. Developing countries needed help from the industrialized countries to implement environmental protection policies. Environmental debt-swap arrangements could help reduce the overexploitation of natural resources. Freer access to international markets for the goods and services of developing countries would also help them empower local communities, introduce clean technologies and meet the Millennium Development Goals. His Government expected more tangible action from the international community on implementing the Kyoto Protocol, conserving biodiversity and mitigating the effects of drought and desertification.

15. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the reports on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions contained in document A/62/276 showed that the link between the environment and migration was receiving greater attention. To facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the problem, IOM proposed the following definition, which used inclusive terminology: "Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged or have to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad". The definition covered persons affected by sudden natural disasters and by gradual deterioration of conditions, and addressed both internal and international migration. To advance dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders, IOM would hold a session on climate change and migration at its upcoming Council meeting and, together with the Government of Greece, was planning a conference for early 2008 on human security and climate change.

16. Climate change, whether catastrophic or gradual, had enormous implications for human security. The risks to public health alone were considerable.

Furthermore, the security of environmental migrants could be undermined by conflicts arising from disputes over resources. Principles and approaches that were already applied in other migration cases should be assessed for their relevance in environmentally induced migration, since early planning and action could limit forced migration and mitigate the impacts of unmanaged mobility. Policy informed by inter-ministerial and public participation, as well as budgetary support for long-term planning, were needed.

17. Since migration and environmental processes were transnational phenomena, they could be usefully addressed through cooperation between States, supported by regional consultative processes for dialogue, research and capacity-building. Multilateral resettlement arrangements might be warranted, and improved cooperation in disaster preparedness and management was crucial.

18. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) pointed out that climate change was the ultimate challenge to the long-term sustainability of life on Earth. At its 116th Assembly in early 2007, IPU had adopted a political declaration that called on parliaments to reinforce climate change policy and legislation and to enhance international cooperation on climate change. Members had pledged to raise the issue of climate change in their respective parliaments and to address questions to ministers regarding their preparation for the Bali Climate Change Conference scheduled for December 2007.

19. Parliaments had been asked to raise awareness of the urgent need to build support, across party lines, for United Nations-led initiatives on climate change and to mainstream the issue in their agendas in order to make substantive progress on both mitigation and adaptation measures. The Union would also encourage closer networking between Parliaments, their specialized committees and grass-roots organizations.

20. In response to the Secretary-General's call to eliminate wasteful practices, IPU was mapping its own carbon footprint and preparing energy-saving solutions and reduction targets. It had also begun budgeting for carbon offsets to apply to official travel.

21. **Mr. Shervani** (India) said that an integrated approach was needed to sustainable development, one that encompassed economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Greater efforts were needed to ensure good governance at the international level and in international trade and finance, as had been stressed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. India was engaged in numerous activities under the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and he called on the donor community to provide greater financial and technical support for the Strategy.

22. Economic growth was imperative for India, but environmental degradation and climate change were also of deep concern. His Government had taken numerous measures to ensure sustainable development through energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable sources of energy. Its Green India project was the world's largest reforestation project, covering six million hectares of degraded forest. A national environmental policy had been adopted in 2006 to mainstream environmental concerns in all development activities.

23. Unfortunately, developing countries bore a disproportionate share of the negative impact of climate change and lacked the resources to tackle the problem. He hoped that developed countries would commit themselves, at the upcoming Bali Conference, to more stringent emissions reduction targets for the post-2012 period under the Kyoto Protocol. India pledged, for its part, that its per capita greenhouse gas emissions would not increase beyond those of the developed countries.

24. Addressing climate change in developing countries would also require the transfer of clean technologies at preferential rates. That would entail changes to the intellectual property rights regime, to balance rewards for innovators with the common good of mankind. New funding would also be required to support the adaptation efforts of developing countries without diverting funds intended for development.

25. Energy was the *sine qua non* of development. As an energy-deficient country, India emphasized energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. However, each country must have the freedom to choose its own mix of energy sources, whether that meant fossil fuels or renewable fuels, including nuclear power.

26. Turning to the issue of biodiversity, he welcomed the recommendation made by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (document

A/62/276, annex III, paragraph 16 (ii)) on the importance of finalizing negotiations on access and benefit-sharing as soon as possible. The regime should include provisions for mandatory disclosure of the country of origin of genetic resources, prior informed consent in intellectual property rights applications and the equitable sharing of benefits.

27. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that mountains were havens of cultural and ecological diversity and were of vital importance for the survival of the entire planet. Mountain ecosystems were particularly vulnerable to climate change and required special protection. The principles of international cooperation on the sustainable development of mountain States had been set forth in the Bishkek Mountain Platform and in General Assembly resolutions and covered, inter alia, raising the living standards of mountain dwellers, preserving their cultural heritage and ensuring their ecological security.

28. Five years after the International Year of Mountains, although there was greater recognition of the importance of the issues, mountainous regions and the people who inhabited them still faced severe problems of poverty reduction, environmental protection and sustainable development. Efforts should be made to capitalize on the progress already achieved. The recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on sustainable mountain development (A/62/292) were highly constructive. International partnerships should be broadened to encompass public associations, the private sector, regional associations and research institutions and should be organized on the basis of thematic, regional and institutional interests. Given the trans-border nature of mountainous regions, regional cooperation — along the lines of the Alpine Convention — was an important tool for sustainable development, and should be linked with relevant multilateral mechanisms. Funding should be increased, including through innovative financial approaches such as debt swapping for sustainable development.

29. In December 2007, the international conference "Bishkek + 5" would be held in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, to be followed by the second Global Mountain Summit in 2009, which would review the progress made since the first summit in 2002. He invited experts from Member States, as well as the various institutes and organizations within the United Nations system, to participate in those events.

30. **Ms. Rodriguez Pineda** (Guatemala) said that she was pleased that the topics of mountains and renewable energy, both of which were of vital importance to Guatemala, were again on the agenda. Guatemala was facing environmental problems that until recently had been unthinkable and that were exacerbated by its economic and social vulnerability.

31. Deforestation and intensive agriculture, as well as natural disasters, had caused widespread damage. In 2005, tropical storm Stan had destroyed infrastructure and caused 4,000 deaths, mainly indigenous people. Guatemala needed international assistance to combat the effects of climate change on the land, both in tropical forests and in the mountains. More help was needed in capacity-building and technical assistance to plan and implement programmes, especially for indigenous communities in the mountains. Progress had been made on sustainable development in those areas, and indigenous communities were directly involved in decision-making, but much more must be done at the national and regional levels. As a member of the Mountain Partnership, Guatemala hoped to generate more investment and funding for sustainable development, particularly through innovative financing mechanisms, debt alleviation and payment for environmental services.

32. Her Government had introduced a law on incentives for renewable energy and was fostering private sector involvement to make new energy sources competitive in the market. It was also working on adaptation to climate change both in the western part of the country, which was prone to flooding and landslides, and in the east, which was prone to drought and famine. A new unit to combat desertification and drought had just been created to coordinate efforts on that front.

33. Tackling climate change required a coherent approach, through international cooperation backed by national policies and strategies, as well as proper funding and technology transfer. To deal with those issues, a Central American presidential summit to be held in 2008 would discuss a regional strategy on climate change and the environment, improvements to information, and the promotion of a new economic sector for climate-friendly goods and services.

34. **Mr. Brevik** (Norway) said that the international community had made huge progress in reaching a global consensus on the need for urgent action to save

the planet. Everyone knew that the current development model was unsustainable and that humankind was living beyond its means. Today's generation was not meeting the needs of the present, let alone safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In the *Global Environment Outlook 4* (GEO-4), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recommended moving the environment from the periphery to the core of decision-making.

35. The world's understanding of the interconnection between sustainable development and climate change was more advanced than ever. Addressing climate change and pursuing economic development were not, therefore, mutually exclusive. The challenge was to find new, low-carbon growth models that allowed countries to grow and prosper without repeating the mistakes and unsustainable growth patterns followed in the industrial world.

36. The Norwegian Prime Minister's recent decision to ask the Minister of International Development to take over the post of Minister of the Environment in addition to his current portfolio illustrated the extent to which Norway considered poverty alleviation, climate change and environmental degradation to be interconnected. His Government had recently announced comprehensive policies on climate change and policies aimed at integrating environmental concerns into its development cooperation. It had also pledged to exceed its Kyoto Protocol emissions commitment by 10 per cent and cut total emissions by 30 per cent compared to 1990 levels by 2020. Between half and two thirds of that effort was expected to come through domestic emissions reductions. Norway aimed to be carbon neutral by 2050. It planned to achieve that by significantly reducing its own emissions and offsetting the remaining emissions by purchasing emissions reductions abroad.

37. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was a key element in the global drive towards sustainable development. To ensure that Norway played a constructive role in that drive, his Government was finalizing a white paper on the prevention of humanitarian crises. That paper included policies aimed at stepping up efforts to prevent humanitarian crises caused by climate change and environmental factors; argued for closer linkages and synergies between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development assistance; and focused on the links between sustainable development, on the one hand, and conflict and peacebuilding, on the other.

38. Any work done under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity and their subsidiary bodies should be holistic and integrated. Strengthened cooperation would promote complementarities and synergies locally and nationally and ensure that measures adopted under one Convention did not undermine the goals of the others. Lastly, the Committee should work to ensure that the Climate Change Conference to be held in Bali in December resulted in forceful decisions that transformed States' common concerns into a new consensus on the way forward.

39. **Mr. Meñez** (Philippines) said that, for several years, the Philippines had been following a clear sustainable development strategy in the form of a Philippine Agenda 21, which was supported, in turn, by a Business Agenda 21. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010 comprised five major thematic thrusts: sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable mining, protection of vulnerable and ecologically fragile areas, a healthy environment, and natural disaster mitigation. Civil society also played a key role in raising awareness of the benefits of sustainable development.

40. As a result, the Government, the private sector and civil society were working together to improve the environment without sacrificing the need to foster economic development and thereby improve people's lives. In an effort to protect the almost 9 million hectares of forest in the Philippines, forest products worth an estimated 54 million pesos that had been cut down and transported illegally had been confiscated. The Government was promoting ecologically sustainable technologies and had recently enacted the Philippine Biofuels Act, which provided the policy environment for diversifying energy sources, thereby promoting indigenous, renewable and sustainable clean energy sources.

41. However, some challenges could be addressed only through international cooperation and action. At the High-level Event on Climate Change, his Government had outlined the need for the global private sector to play a more active role in developing cleaner technologies and pointed out that almost all

developing countries lacked the financial resources needed to respond adequately to the effects of climate change. It had also raised cross-cutting policy concerns on financing, and technological and capacity-related challenges and constraints at the May 2007 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

42. The Philippines was preparing for the Bali Climate Change Conference in December through a multi-stakeholder approach. Earlier that month, it had held its first National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation, organized primarily for local government units, with input from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative and the World Agroforestry Centre.

43. Lastly, he conveyed his delegation's support for the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/62/262).

44. **Mr. Metelitsa** (Belarus) said that the global demand for energy could be met only by increasing the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and by promoting new energy-saving technologies. Belarus had developed a new concept of energy security, which would require significant financial and technological resources but would provide for the introduction of energy-saving technologies in active production lines, the creation of new productive capacities on the basis of such technologies and an increase in the share of alternative and renewable energy sources. His delegation hoped that UNDP and other agencies of the United Nations system would provide as much assistance as possible to Belarus for the full implementation of that concept.

45. The United Nations should begin to take practical measures for the global transfer and dissemination of new energy-saving technologies and technologies involving the use of alternative and renewable energy sources. Such measures should also ensure that those technologies became accessible to developing countries. In that connection, his delegation proposed that the General Assembly should, at its sixty-third session, hold a debate on technologies involving the use of alternative and renewable energy sources as the global commons.

46. With regard to climate change, Belarus was the first country to propose an amendment to annex B of the Kyoto Protocol whereby it assured a commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. The amendment had been adopted at the most recent session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, but accepted thus far by only three States. His delegation therefore called on the representatives of all countries that were parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to work towards the swift completion of the domestic procedures necessary for the amendment to come into force.

47. The agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol must have a more flexible mechanism that allowed States to assume quantitative obligations to reduce their emissions. Otherwise an absurd situation could arise in which a State prepared to assume such obligations was prevented from doing so by red tape. A unanimous decision by the parties to the new agreement should be sufficient to establish obligations under the agreement, including those involving emission reductions.

48. **Mr. Guillén** (Peru) said that GEO-4 revealed a great deal about the current state of the environment and clearly demonstrated the urgency of addressing what it called "persistent problems". Such problems, while difficult to manage, were key to achieving global environmental sustainability. Inaction threatened all humanity. A root cause of the current pressure on the environment was the persistent poverty affecting over half the world's population and poverty eradication was essential to creating a sustainable planet. Development policies must balance sustained economic growth with social development and environmental protection. In order for sustainable development goals to be achieved, the international community must build capacity in developing countries and promote the transfer of environmentally clean and energy-efficient technologies. More specific commitments and targets were needed in that regard.

49. Climate change, which had repercussions for development and international security, had a disproportionate effect on developing countries. In addition, environmental degradation had increased the destructive potential of, and sometimes even triggered, disasters, as illustrated by the number of major hydrological disasters in the last 55 years. The inextricably linked challenges of global warming and current disaster trends must be addressed in an integrated manner. The frequency and intensity of

extreme climatic phenomena was unprecedented, owing at least in part to human activity.

50. In that connection, participants in the Bali Climate Change Conference must draw up a road map and common platform so that negotiations on the future regime could begin as soon as possible. The emissions reduction targets adopted needed to be more ambitious than those agreed during the first period of commitments. Peru would work to achieve a common platform that took account of the instruments agreed during the first period and was based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

51. Mountain ecosystems were very vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and must therefore be protected, by means of a long-term political commitment and a sustainable development strategy. He hoped that, at the current session, progress would be made so as to create the right conditions for the sustainable development of people who depended on mountain ecosystems and eradicate the poverty affecting so many of them.

52. Peru had recently participated in the official launch of the International Year of the Potato (2008) and was actively preparing for its celebration. The Year provided a unique opportunity to promote the biological, nutritional and culinary value of the potato, which dated back over 8,000 years and had been domesticated by the ancient inhabitants of the Peruvian Andes. The potato was now an essential part of the culture and diet of many countries and had been fundamental tool in the fight against the famine that had devastated certain parts of the world a few decades earlier. The Year was also an opportunity to conduct further scientific research into the potato's diversity with a view to improving production and thereby enabling it to continue to be used to combat hunger and malnutrition throughout the world, particularly in mountain areas.

53. Peru attached particular importance to renewable and alternative energy sources. Hydropower was a key component in Peru's energy infrastructure. Hydraulic power accounted for 47 per cent of Peru's total installed power and, a few years previously, 76 per cent of the electricity produced in the country had been generated by water. Peru had made energy diversification a priority, but faced major obstacles, particularly in the area of financial resources and clean technology transfer. Hence the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation, and private sector involvement.

54. **Mr. Dah** (Côte d'Ivoire), recalling that the Ivorian economy was based on agriculture and, therefore, subject to climatic influences, said that the effects of climate change were environmental, economic and social and would probably increase with time, potentially reaching catastrophic dimensions in some parts of the globe within a few decades. National experts and UNDP had noted a gradual and alarming temperature rise in Côte d'Ivoire. As temperatures increased, rainfall decreased, threatening the agricultural sector. According to experts, climate variability linked to fluctuating rainfall caused further rural impoverishment and environmental degradation, and seriously threatened food security.

55. Climate change affected all countries. However, its impact was felt much more in the developing world, particularly Africa, where it undermined efforts to eradicate poverty and to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Climate change must therefore be seen not as an essentially environmental issue, but as a development issue that must be addressed through an integrated approach in line with the principles of sustainable development. Of course, efforts to combat climate change must go hand in hand with, not replace, development assistance.

56. The international community must adopt measures to help States prepare themselves for the effects of climate change. However, given the potentially catastrophic events to come, it would be irresponsible for the world to simply sit back and trust in mankind's ability to adapt and scientific progress to save it. Mitigation was the best form of adaptation, as any delay in reducing emissions would only increase the need and cost of adaptation and the risk of unchecked climate change. The clean development mechanism, which aimed to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, must be implemented in an equitable manner. Most of the few projects implemented thus far targeted the largest developing countries, as they were the major emissions producers. Smaller and poorer developing countries, despite being the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, had generally been overlooked.

57. Development partners must make carbon funds more accessible so as to promote climate change

adaptation in Africa and help African countries meet their energy needs while moving towards cleaner energy. In addition, African countries must be assisted in developing new sectors, such as renewable energy, and in designing and certifying clean development mechanism projects. Under a new policy of his Government, Ivorian citizens were being encouraged to plant trees in an attempt to offset deforestation.

58. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol were a solid basis for multilateral action. While some progress had been made on their implementation, the measures adopted thus far were insufficient, owing to developed countries' reluctance to change their development models and developing countries' legitimate concerns about their development prospects. At the current critical juncture, there was an urgent need for consensus on the way forward.

59. Developing and developed countries had a shared responsibility to formulate a concept of development that met the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Solutions did exist. All that was needed was a desire to implement them.

60. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) recalled that Malta had placed climate change on the international political agenda for the first time in 1988 by asking the Secretary-General to include on the agenda of the Assembly's forty-third session an item entitled "Conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind" and had piloted the draft resolution later unanimously adopted as resolution 43/53 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind. That initiative almost 20 years earlier had led to the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

61. The Prime Minister of Malta had proposed the establishment of a mechanism, possibly a group of experts, which would report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on activities undertaken over the past 20 years in response to climate change. The report should include elements of a possible future global strategy and propose innovative measures to encourage the widest possible cooperation among States in ensuring an effective international response to the negative impacts of climate change in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and their respective capabilities and socio-economic conditions. Together with the outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference, the report would serve as a blueprint for a future global strategy. Malta's proposal aimed to consolidate United Nations efforts in responding globally and coherently by climate change mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the special needs of small island States. As the Secretary-General had stated at the end of the High-level Event on Climate Change, economic and social development could not be sustainable unless the international community dealt decisively with climate change. As a small island State vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, Malta understood that message. As part of its continuing contribution, it intended to host a centre to train Government officials in climate law and policy. The centre's activities would focus on the needs of developing States, particularly small island States.

62. **Mr. Vassylenko** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine was firmly committed to its obligations under Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. His Government had recently approved a national environment strategy, which sought to strengthen environmental governance locally and nationally, and promote an integrated approach to sustainable development by mainstreaming environmental considerations into national programmes. Sound national environmental policies coupled with good governance were key to achieving sustainable development. The absence of an effective and comprehensive solution to the world's urgent ecological needs undermined sustainable development and threatened the very existence of mankind. Ecological challenges must be addressed through concerted international efforts, not just national efforts.

63. Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome's call for a more coherent institutional framework, he proposed creating, under the aegis of the United Nations, a permanent universal environmental organization where Governments, industrialists, scientists and civil society would, through constructive dialogue, resolve ecological conflicts of interest. National delegations to the proposed organization should include representatives from competent State bodies, the business sector, the field of ecological science and environmental NGOs.

64. To attain the Millennium Development Goals, the international community needed to establish an effective institutional framework capable of creating a

new ecological conscience and ecological solidarity and responsibility worldwide. Such a framework was the foundation for the comprehensive system of international ecological security that was essential for sustainable development and the very survival of civilization.

65. **Ms. Halliyadde** (Sri Lanka) said that climate change threatened to cause large-scale migration and to create greater competition for the Earth's resources, which might increase the danger of conflicts and wars. The world was already experiencing the disruptive effects of climate change, which would place an increasingly heavy burden on the most vulnerable countries in particular. The international community therefore had no choice but to develop a comprehensive, collective response to that global threat.

66. As a country which recognized the importance of participating in the clean development mechanism, Sri Lanka had acceded to the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. In keeping with its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Sri Lanka has submitted an initial national communication to that body in October 2000 and had prepared its first inventory of greenhouse gases in 1994. It was preparing the second national communication and was expected to update the inventory of greenhouse gases.

67. At the second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism, held recently in Davos, Sri Lanka had announced an initiative entitled "A Tourism Earth Lung — Towards a Carbon Clean Sri Lanka". As a small country which depended heavily on long-haul travel to generate tourism income, Sri Lanka aimed to become the first carbon neutral destination: its tropical forest systems could store large amounts of carbon which would otherwise add to the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Sri Lanka had also initiated action to include tourism within the framework of its carbon trading policy and would take significant steps to make Sri Lanka a carbon neutral country within a specific time frame.

68. Mechanisms must be established to enable developing countries to engage in carbon trading and to trade in the value represented by the forest cover. While traditional knowledge and experience should be used to maintain such forest cover, relevant technology and financial assistance should also be made available to developing countries to enable them to adopt environmentally friendly approaches to development. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must also adopt the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

69. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that the focus on climate change had intensified recently, particularly following the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and in the run-up to the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference. His delegation believed that it would be possible in Bali for the international community to agree on a road map for negotiations on the future of the Kyoto Protocol regime. Those negotiations should be undertaken in a spirit of full transparency and their outcome should guarantee the operation and continuation of market instruments, such as the clean development mechanism, while also recognizing historical responsibility for past emissions and adopting the principle that the polluter should pay.

70. Targets should be defined for annex I countries for the post-2012 period based on scientific approaches and with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It was important to emphasize that the Kyoto Protocol did not "expire" in 2012. Thus, it was not accurate to refer to a "post-Kyoto regime". Such inappropriate references sent the wrong signals to society and to markets and were inconsistent with the magnitude and urgency of the problem. Furthermore, the voluntary efforts made by developing countries to reduce their emissions should be supported by increased financial and technological transfers from annex I countries.

71. The ongoing consultations on environmental governance were of the utmost importance in view of the need for a more coherent and effective framework for United Nations environmental activities. In that connection, Brazil had recently organized the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development: Challenges for International Governance. While the areas of convergence had been highlighted in the final document of the Ministerial Conference (A/62/356), most of the differences that had emerged centred on the new institutional framework for United Nations environmental activities. Whatever institutional framework reforms were eventually agreed upon, sustainable development must be at the heart of the solution.

72. An improved framework for sustainable development was crucial for more efficient international governance in sustainable development in order to address environmental challenges. Measures to strengthen that structure must, inter alia: be developed in accordance with the Rio principles and Agenda 21; enable the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved and the commitments assumed under the Monterrey Consensus to be honoured; and take into account the needs of all countries, particularly developing countries, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Institutional arrangements must not only strengthen the international environmental governance system but also be responsive to regional and national priorities, needs and capacities.

73. **Ms. Bovi** (San Marino) said that the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had clearly outlined the difficult challenges ahead and the urgent action needed. Her delegation agreed that climate change could be a serious obstacle to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and strongly believed in the need to focus efforts on making progress towards the use of new and renewable energy sources. It also agreed that international conferences, particularly with the regular participation of civil society and the private sector, provided important forums for exchanges of experience in that area. San Marino was drawing up a national energy plan to effectively promote the use of environmentally friendly new and renewable sources of energy. Such new legislation would substantially modify the energy and environmental habits of the entire nation and reduce its dependency on energy imports.

74. Water scarcity was another obstacle to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Effective water management strategies and educational programmes about more sustainable water use were therefore urgently required at all levels. Moreover, social policies must be based on sustainable development and respect for the Earth's resources. The current aggressive and indiscriminate exploitation of those resources would very soon change the world beyond all recognition. Immediate action was required to preserve the planet for the generations to come.

75. **Ms. Tembo** (Zambia) said that the achievement of sustainable development was no longer an option but a prerequisite for survival. Failure to adopt a more environmentally friendly development model would be a recipe for chaos and destruction. The Committee should reaffirm the continuing need to balance economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. Agenda 21 remained relevant and must be implemented by all Member States, together with the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Zambia had already applied the principles of sustainable development to its overall national development planning. In that regard, Zambia's Vision 2030 document and its fifth national development plan could be seen as a national strategy for sustainable development, which also incorporated the Millennium Development Goals.

76. At the intergovernmental level, the Commission on Sustainable Development played an indispensable role by providing a high-level forum for the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The measures and actions agreed in the Commission had also built on those contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. While her delegation was disappointed that the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had failed to reach a consensus on a decision text, it urged all States to work towards a successful outcome to the sixteenth session.

77. Her delegation commended the Commission on Sustainable Development for its role in showcasing voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships working on innovative models for the implementation of sustainable development goals. Partnership played a key role in complementing governmental efforts to meet the commitments entered into under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Partnerships in Zambia had also made a significant contribution towards the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

78. The General Assembly should send a very clear message to the forthcoming Bali Climate Change Conference concerning the need to operationalize the mechanisms used to finance projects under the Convention in developing countries, particularly the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol and the Special Climate Change Fund. Measures must also be put in place to ensure the equitable participation of all countries in the market-based mechanisms of the Kyoto

Protocol, including the clean development mechanism. While that mechanism had been designed to benefit developing countries, not all such countries had been able to participate in it. Her delegation urged developed countries to take the lead in emission reductions, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and called for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to be strengthened while work began in earnest on a post-2012 agreement.

79. The international community must do more to help developing countries combat desertification, particularly in Africa, through the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. While Zambia had taken the initiative to prepare national action plans and to integrate them into its national development plans, those efforts were being undermined by the lack of financing for implementation of the Convention from multilateral agencies and institutions, including the Global Environment Facility. Her delegation therefore called for the Facility to be strengthened in the focal area of land degradation and for donors and the Facility Council to allocate more financial resources to land degradation in the fifth replenishment.

80. Her delegation also expressed concern about the lack of agreement on the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing and wondered whether it would still be possible to meet the 2010 biodiversity target.

81. **Ms. Radu** (Moldova) said that, as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Moldova was committed to contributing to international efforts to moderate human impact on the global climate and had undertaken a number of activities in that respect, including the preparation of a greenhouse gas inventory, the development of adaptation measures and the promotion of educational programmes to raise awareness among the population. While Moldova had no obligations under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, over the past 15 years such emissions in Moldova had fallen by more than 25 per cent. Her Government had already developed its first national communication and had drafted a plan of actions to alleviate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change. The next step was to identify possible ways to rehabilitate the most important economic sectors and to introduce renewable energy sources in order to further reduce emissions.

82. As a new democracy, Moldova was faced with the problem of attempting to transition to a market economy while lacking sufficient resources to meet the increasing demand for energy. Her Government was therefore promoting the use of biofuels and biomass as renewable sources of energy. A few experimental wind installations were also producing electricity in the few suitable parts of the country.

83. Moldova was currently working to harmonize its laws and standards with those of the European Union. In that respect, national priorities included implementing the European Union Water Framework Directive, preventing the loss of biodiversity, managing obsolete organic pollutants and ensuring effective land management. Several projects were being carried out in cooperation with the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP.

84. Climate change and desertification were connected, posing a threat to sustainable development in general and to developing countries in particular. Given the increasing devastation caused by climate change, it was regrettable that international efforts to combat such phenomena remained rather modest. The international community must therefore adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach, which should encompass short-, medium- and long-term goals while also incorporating the specific challenges faced by each country. It must also be recalled that developing countries, countries in transition and least developed countries were the most vulnerable to climate change. The international community must therefore ensure that the impact of climate change on those countries did not undermine their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

85. The recent drought in Moldova had affected over 80 per cent of the nation's farmland, resulting in a significant loss of livestock and agricultural produce. Her delegation expressed its gratitude to all the Governments, international organizations and public and private agencies that had provided assistance to Moldova during that difficult period. The negative impact of the drought had been particularly severe because the majority of the Moldovan population lived in rural areas and agriculture was their main source of income. In response, Moldova was drafting a sustainable agricultural policy, designed to mitigate potential losses from drought in the coming decades.

However, such national efforts would be successful only as part of wider, more global efforts.

86. Her delegation called for agreement as soon as possible on an ambitious, comprehensive treaty, negotiated within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and building on the Kyoto Protocol. A binding, multilateral formula should set clear and quantifiable targets for industrialized and developing countries. Only the United Nations could deliver a truly multilateral solution and it should therefore provide the framework for negotiations by all countries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

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Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 30 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Santizo-Sandoval (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guatemala)

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07-56999 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Lintonen (Finland), Ms. Santizo-Sandoval (Guatemala), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

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(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

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(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/62/276)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (*continued*) (A/62/25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Ms. Armanni-Sequi** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) noted the great progress made in 2007 towards a common understanding of disaster risk reduction and its value at the community level, where preparedness and vulnerability could be a life and death issue. Global commitments were meaningless without action at the local level. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) had worked to bridge the local and the global using its network of community-based and nationally recognized societies. In Central America, it had published and disseminated handbooks on disaster risk reduction to enhance disaster management at the community level. That project was very much in line with priority 3 of the Hyogo Framework for Action and with the recommendations that the Framework be implemented through multi-stakeholder partnerships. The project had been carried out with the support of the ProVention Consortium and the Organization of American States, and in cooperation with various international and national stakeholders.

2. The work of IFRC in partnership with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction had included the launching on 9 October 2007 of the Global Alliance on disaster risk reduction in order to bring together resources and expertise to confront the humanitarian and development challenges posed by natural disasters. Such collaboration was essential in view of the increased incidence of natural disasters and the changes in weather characteristics and patterns. Greater priority should be given to climate-related disasters and linkages with the scientific community should be enhanced. To that end, IFRC had cooperated with the World Meteorological Organization in establishing the International Early Warning Platform.

3. The number of natural disasters was rising at an alarming rate: IFRC had responded to 482 disaster events in 2006, compared to 287 in 2004, and another record figure was expected for 2007.

4. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, established in The Hague in 2002 with the support of the Netherlands Red Cross, was respected by professionals throughout the world and was well-connected to the main global and regional institutions in that field. It had also become an indispensable link between disaster risk reduction and climate change.

5. One of the main themes of the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to be held in Geneva at the end of November, was to be the prevention, reduction and response to the impact of climate change on vulnerable people. The Conference should deliver a strong collective commitment to action on that issue.

6. IFRC called on Member States to renew their commitment to disaster risk reduction and to recognize its place in adaptation strategies. A bridge should be constructed between the discussions in Kobe and those in Kyoto. Member States should also strengthen their national platforms and make firm pledges at the thirtieth International Conference. IFRC requested support for its efforts through the Global Alliance or through national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Governments should use their national societies as auxiliaries to enhance technical expertise, improve information sharing and help to protect lives and livelihoods.

7. **Ms. Bensmail** (Algeria) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/62/262) indicated the progress made by Governments and United Nations organizations towards achieving sustainable development goals that encompassed economic, social and environmental aspects in a balanced and integrated manner. It was essential to enhance the impact and visibility of programme activities by increasing productive investments in rural and agricultural areas in order to achieve food security.

8. Algeria was committed to sustainable development, in particular through the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It would take action at all levels and engage in international cooperation in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Those efforts would contribute to integrating the three interdependent and complementary pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and the environment. The elimination of poverty, changes in inappropriate production methods and consumption patterns and the protection and management of natural resources were prerequisites for sustainable development.

9. Algeria's plan for the consolidation of economic growth in all sectors took account of sustainable development principles and environmental protection, while supporting economic growth and combating poverty and social exclusion. In response to the main national development challenges and in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, Algeria had implemented a development support programme for the highlands and the south of the country, in order to reduce regional and local inequalities and bring a sustainable improvement in living conditions in those regions. The national agricultural development plan was intended to meet food security needs, combat the continuing degradation of the environment and desertification and protect natural resources and the environment.

10. Environmental deterioration and climate change had a negative impact on the sustainable development of all countries, especially the developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries of Africa. Algeria was continuing and expanding its efforts in relation to the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as the United Nations Millennium Summit.

11. The Algerian Government was deeply committed to implementing strategies for environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources. State regulatory bodies had focused on environmental preservation in the context of the sustainable development strategy since the beginning of 2000. Algeria had promulgated legislative texts covering environmental preservation issues to contribute to the sustainability and stability of the economic and social development process. There were also laws on waste management, environmental protection and the prevention of major risks designed to assess the environmental impact of development projects and their impact on the life of the population. It was essential to take the human dimension into account in the process of sustainable development and environmental protection. Innovative action in that area focused on education and awareness raising and the offering of green employment in local communities.

12. Algeria extended its appreciation to the Mediterranean Action Plan for awarding the title of Mediterranean Ambassador to its Minister for Land Management, Environment and Tourism, who was also President of the World Deserts Foundation, in recognition of Algeria's efforts to protect nature and sustainable development and also coastal areas, ecosystems and biodiversity in the Mediterranean.

13. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, Heads of State had made a commitment to substantially reducing the loss of biodiversity in their respective countries before 2010. That goal could still be attained if the international community would renew its efforts and stop the current catastrophic loss.

States should pool their efforts and resources for the sake of their shared future, in a determined fight for the development of human rights, a healthy environment, a dignified and decent life and harmonious, real, sustainable and global development for the benefit of all. Algeria was firmly committed to the establishment of an international partnership based on an integrated approach that would support the synergies needed to respond better to the immense challenges of climate change, desertification and biodiversity in order to achieve sustainable development.

14. **Ms. Toutkhalian** (Armenia) said that the promotion of new and renewable energy sources was vital for Armenia, a small landlocked country without significant resources of coal, oil or gas. In 2005 the Government had adopted an energy security and independence strategy which had identified three main priorities — the use of renewable or alternative sources of energy, the use of nuclear energy and the diversification of energy sources — in addition to participation in regional energy projects.

15. Armenia had considerable potential renewable energy sources such as hydropower, wind power and solar energy. The Government had created favourable conditions for alternative energy development such as tax and customs privileges for importing equipment for wind energy station construction. Currently available resources should be sufficient to establish a wind power system which could produce a total of over 450 megawatts of energy. The project would be implemented over the next 15 years. Armenia also had significant solar energy development potential, which could substantially reduce energy imports. Armenia had all the necessary conditions, including experts and infrastructure, to develop renewable energy technologies.

16. The Government of Armenia had adopted a law on energy and a law on energy saving and renewable energy, in addition to a national energy sector development strategy. The strategy identified the need to prioritize and make use of Armenia's renewable energy potential of over 5 billion kilowatts, most of it from hydroenergy.

17. The Fund for Energy Saving and Renewable Energy had been created with the assistance of donor organizations such as the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and USAID. For countries such as Armenia, with considerable renewable energy resources but an inadequate technological base, the transfer of technologies from developed countries would propel the whole sector to a new level. The financial assistance, technical support and expertise provided by the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other entities were invaluable.

18. With those measures and a realistic assessment of the renewable energy resources available, Armenia would eventually be able to meet its energy needs from its own resources.

19. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that the challenge of climate change called for commitment on the part of all stakeholders, and that a substantial proportion of investments planned for the energy sector must be devoted to renewable sources. The Principality was reducing its reliance on fossil fuels in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To that end, it was introducing solar heating in buildings and diester in buses, encouraged car-pooling and offered State subsidies for the purchase of ecological vehicles, either hybrid or electric, that also used biofuel.

20. In February 2008 Monaco would host the tenth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be attended by professionals and investors involved in research, development and marketing relating to new technologies in the environmental field. It had recently enacted laws that would serve as an incentive for those wishing to establish and manage ecologically and socially responsible investment funds. Monaco was negotiating a clean development mechanism agreement with an African country which included projects to use solar energy for water supplies and rural electrification. Near Monaco, the first forest carbon sink in Europe in the framework of the Kyoto Protocol and the UNEP Billion Tree Campaign would capture carbon dioxide in areas around the Principality and combat global warming. As a member of the Environmental Integrity Group, Monaco benefited from advantageous rates for maintenance of its National Register of Carbon Units under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and an agreement had been signed with the National Forestry Office for forestry projects to combat global warming.

21. Reiterating Monaco's support for UNEP and its transformation into the United Nations Environment

Organization, she stressed the need for predictable funding and wider scientific expertise. Her delegation firmly supported the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems and trusted that the International Year of Planet Earth in 2008 would mobilize all citizens of the world to face the challenges ahead.

22. **Mr. Rangel** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his Government, in accordance with the internationally agreed goals, had undertaken extensive efforts to bring about positive changes, with strong community participation. The strengthening of sustainable development had been a key element in the Government's actions. Such development had to involve cooperation that promoted independence and development in a disinterested manner and was free of conditions that would lead to domination and poverty.

23. Avoiding responsibility for the issue of climate change, by denying the central role of fossil fuels in the energy sector and underestimating existing carbon capture technologies, served only to fuel greed. The financing of climate change efforts should not focus on carbon emissions trading, which mostly benefited only developed countries. The sovereign right of countries to decide on the use of their natural resources and their energy and environmental policy should be respected and his country rejected any attempt to link oil prices to economic crises and increased poverty in many countries. Multilateralism should be enhanced by strengthening mechanisms for development cooperation based on solidarity and inclusiveness that ensured greater well-being and social justice.

24. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in relation to the issue of climate change and atmospheric pollution, was still valid, as was the link with the issue of poverty. The developed countries should demonstrate their willingness to change their currently unsustainable production and consumption patterns. They should also make progress towards meeting the 0.7 per cent target for ODA and provide guarantees for the unconditional transfer of clean and appropriate technologies. The entire framework of clean development mechanisms should be modified, as it had not benefited the developing countries but had become an economic incentive that exacerbated the environmental crisis and encouraged the prevailing production and consumption model, without significantly reducing the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the industrialized countries.

25. Desertification and its effects also went hand in hand with poverty, constituting a serious and global problem. If desertification was not halted or reversed, food production in many areas would diminish, leading to malnutrition and even famine. The developed countries should renew their commitment to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, setting measurable goals and providing financial resources. Additional funds from new donors and from the Global Environment Facility were needed.

26. The Convention on Biological Diversity was the ideal instrument to promote activities for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. His delegation supported the implementation of that Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, as well as other agreements relating to biodiversity and the Johannesburg commitment to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss significantly by 2010. For the least developed countries, technology transfer and financial resources were needed to assist in the process of adapting their monitoring and information systems, as the producing or exporting countries did not currently have segregation systems to guarantee identity protection. Standards should be developed for the identification, handling, packaging and transport of living modified organisms in order to facilitate the establishment of clear rules in the international system. His country totally rejected the use of genetic use restriction technologies (terminator technologies), field trials and the marketing of sterile seed technologies. Financial resources should not be allocated to cooperation for research and studies to measure the impacts of such technology on agricultural biological diversity and specifically the socioeconomic, ecological and cultural impacts on the basis of "case-by-case" risk assessment.

27. In recent years there had been an orchestrated campaign to portray the oil-producing countries as the cause of the hunger and poverty from which South countries had suffered for years. That campaign ignored the main role played by the huge external debt that had led many countries to total ruin. Energy could be used either to eliminate poverty and improve the quality of life of peoples or to increase inequality and the profits of private multinational companies.

28. Integration and cooperation between peoples, based on the principles of solidarity, complementarity and reciprocity, were the true mechanisms for attacking poverty, achieving economic and social development and forging democratic societies where justice and social equity prevailed. Through energy cooperation the countries of the South could increase their strengths and reduce their vulnerabilities. Over 80 per cent of the oil and gas reserves of the American continent were in Latin America and could be placed at the service of its peoples. Solidarity-based energy integration would contribute to comprehensive development and promote social justice in the countries of the continent. In that context, consideration should be given to factors that distorted energy costs and mainly benefited the masters of the world economy.

29. Energy consumption patterns had to be changed to allow ethical and efficient energy use and support for cooperation programmes and activities for energy saving. States should promote the sustainable development of renewable alternative energies, including biofuels, and promote the environmentally friendly use of fossil fuels, as they would continue to play a dominant role in future decades. The agricultural, social and environmental aspects of biofuel production and use should be harmonized in order to avoid any risk to countries' food security.

30. States should reach a consensus in order to achieve in a harmonious manner the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — so that solidarity, equality and the dignity of peoples would prevail. Current and future generations would condemn them or thank them for their efforts.

31. **Ms. Gustava** (Mozambique), speaking on item 54 (c), said that the impact of the unprecedented increase in natural disasters had been felt more in developing countries, given their lack of human and technical resources for response and adaptation. More decisive, sustained and systematic risk reduction through accelerated implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and strengthened national and local capacities were therefore required, as was further development and use of scientific and technical knowledge for building resilience to natural disasters. International cooperation must address vulnerabilities to natural disasters through strengthened partnerships and coordination among countries.

32. Mozambique's geographical location, long coastline and local climatic influences made it prone to natural disasters, aggravated in turn by inadequate infrastructures; disaster management was thus a cross-cutting issue forming an integral part of the Government's agenda. Success in fighting poverty depended on reducing the vulnerability of the poor, who were most exposed. Accordingly, in 2006 the Government had adopted its Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Master Plan comprising a 10-year programme to prepare responses and resistance to the effects of natural disasters. There was also a round-the-clock national operative emergency centre run by various ministries.

33. Those measures' positive impact had been visible during the recent floods and cyclones. Despite the international community's generous support, more cooperation was called for and universal access to all information and services, exchange of experience and knowledge, and training must be ensured so that developing countries could improve their risk reduction and adaptation to climate change. She exhorted the international community, especially the international financial institutions, to support disaster-stricken countries' efforts at risk reduction and in the post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation process.

34. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico) said that the international community had yet to integrate environmental issues into global, regional and national agendas, while the environment must be incorporated into national development policies, so that sustainable development was effectively promoted and could thus contribute to poverty eradication. The greatest challenge was the effective translation of the cross-cutting sustainable development agenda into all programmes and activities, not only of the Government but of all sectors of society.

35. Mexico was endeavouring to make the environment an element of competitiveness and social and economic development and a cross-cutting theme of public policy that required close coordination at the various levels of the Government, whose National Development Plan provided for increased efforts to enhance inter-agency coordination and intersectoral integration.

36. Development models that did not take the environment into account led to climate change, loss of biodiversity, air and water pollution, environmental

and health degradation caused by improper handling of chemicals, and desertification. Mexico would continue to participate in international cooperation to help consolidate an international agenda founded on clearly defined principles and supported by strong institutions.

37. The failure of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to agree on policy options and actions for implementing sustainable development objectives had demonstrated the need for a critical review of the Commission's procedures and issues so as to avoid duplication and the loss of already limited financial resources. Nonetheless, the Commission's discussions had been useful and should result in an appeal to strengthen energy efficiency, renewable energy, adaptation and mitigation, with an intersectoral approach based on best practices.

38. Already facing the adverse impact of climate change, Mexico was intensifying its mitigation policies and following the guidelines of its new National Strategy. The clean development mechanism was not enough; the global scale of mitigation needed to be increased through measurable and verifiable actions in agreed multilateral forums, provided that they were consistent with national development needs. Mexico was ready to negotiate, under the aegis of the Climate Change Convention, a new, balanced, fair climate change regime, which should include sectoral approaches, intensity indicators, and a fund with clear, inclusive funding arrangements, as well as new international cooperation mechanisms with incentives that complemented — rather than replaced — developing countries' national mitigation efforts and were proportional to those efforts. Adaptation to climate change must also be given priority in order to strengthen response capacity and reduce vulnerability. Mexico trusted that the Bali Climate Change Conference would establish a road map and the mechanisms for negotiation of the future climate change regime.

39. **Ms. Makhumula** (Malawi) said that, despite positive emerging trends, more needed to be done to bring prosperity to many parts of the world, especially Africa, where poverty was appallingly high. Implementation of the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Action must be accelerated as a matter of urgency in order to promote economic and social development and environmental protection and, ultimately, the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Her delegation looked forward to the consideration at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development of the relevant thematic clusters, including agriculture, especially with reference to Africa's least developed countries. Agriculture was the engine of Malawi's economy and provided a livelihood for most of its population, who lived in rural areas.

40. Commending the call for political will expressed during the recent High-level Event on Climate Change, she urged the industrialized nations to take the lead in reducing carbon emissions and helping developing countries invest in new low-carbon-emission technologies, pursuant to the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Only then could the developing countries overcome the constraints identified during the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. She trusted that the Bali Climate Change Conference would have positive outcomes to address the effects of climate change.

41. She appealed to the United Nations to ensure that the least developed countries received the technical assistance that would enable them to develop appropriate and affordable technologies for renewable energy, which were essential in the fight against deforestation and desertification, especially in rural Africa, where wood was the only source of energy. Her country continued to promote the use of renewable energy, as well as putting disaster reduction high on its developmental agenda in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action. Activities included guidance for district officials, development of district disaster risk management plans, and raising awareness of inhabitants of flood-prone areas.

42. **Mr. Al-Basri** (Iraq) said that the first challenge of sustainable development was managing resources in a way that raised living standards without causing conflicts. Development could not be addressed in isolation from environmental concerns. Although his country's laws required development projects to take into account environmental impact, development in Iraq was unfortunately far from meeting the requirements of sustainability. Time, money and effort were needed to conduct regional environmental impact studies in conjunction with Iraq's neighbours and devise strategies to increase the use of clean energy.

43. His country also suffered from radiation pollution due to industrial and military activities. In 2004 UNEP, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and with funding from Japan, had launched an environmental cleanup project that included a facility for the disposal of radioactive waste. Until recently, Iraq had not been a party to any international environmental conventions, but in recent years it had deposited its instrument of accession to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and was taking steps to accede to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes.

44. Protection of the environment, and in particular the reduction of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, was important for sustainable development. His country was in the process of ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was the cornerstone of international cooperation in that regard and should be universalized. It would combat corruption, establish transparency in its oil sector and continue to implement development projects in accordance with the International Compact with Iraq, and expected the international community to fulfil its commitments to provide the necessary resources under the international partnership provided for under that initiative.

45. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that issues relating to energy, global climate, drought and desertification and disaster reduction were closely related and required coordinated policies supported by multilateral cooperation and global partnership. Energy was at the heart of sustainable development challenges, and developing countries should have access to clean technology and new, renewable and affordable sources of energy.

46. The search for renewable energy, particularly biofuel derived from food crops, had negative implications for the developing countries with respect to trade, agriculture and food security. Strong demand for such crops was likely to keep their prices high, making farmers in developed countries less supportive of concessions in the Doha Round. Non-tariff barriers such as regulations governing genetically modified crops were likely to continue to restrict access to potential agricultural export markets.

47. If the current trend of worsening drought and desertification continued, sub-Saharan Africa would have to wait until 2030 to meet the target set in the Millennium Development Goals for the elimination of hunger. Climate change was exacerbating the challenge posed by desertification and drought, notwithstanding the laudable efforts under way within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Continued migration from rural to urban areas prompted by rural poverty further harmed vulnerable economies and pushed increasing numbers of people in developing countries below the poverty line.

48. Severe flooding in Uganda was currently causing major damage to transport infrastructure and was destroying crops and farmland, thereby jeopardizing development for years to come. International disaster response and reduction efforts should focus on enhancing and strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to provide effective humanitarian assistance programmes, including under the Hyogo Framework for Action. His Government attached high priority to promoting resilience to disasters.

49. An integrated and balanced approach was required in policies to address the environmental, social and economic dimensions of environmental degradation. The approach should be based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility and on national sustainable development strategies.

50. The international community thus far had lacked the political will to provide developing countries with sufficient resources to achieve the goals of sustainable development. He emphasized the need for increased financial and technical assistance, a political commitment to improve access to available environmentally friendly technologies, efforts to stimulate the development of more innovative technologies, and measures to engage the private sector as an essential partner. In addition, developing countries required support in the form of a fair chance to trade, effective debt relief, increased FDI and assistance for capacity-building.

51. **Mr. Issetov** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan was committed to the full implementation of the targets agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, by initiating complex political, economic and social reforms to establish a democratic State with a market economy. The main economic priority for Kazakhstan was to avoid overdependence on its oil, gas and

minerals sector and to use those natural assets to build a diversified and highly technological economy with a high value-added component. The introduction of international technical and business standards, accession to the World Trade Organization, promotion of corporate governance, education and administrative reform had been identified as some of the key drivers in that process. With the aim of reducing bureaucracy and combating corruption, the Government of Kazakhstan was introducing e-government in all major sectors. Provision of quality education to meet the challenges of the times was an important factor for economic and social development. Higher education and vocational training were provided free of charge in Kazakhstan.

52. If not confronted properly, climate change might have irreversible consequences for life on Earth. In the interests of future generations, all countries had to take practical actions to confront that threat and to reduce emissions. Developed countries had a critical role to play in providing technological and financial support to developing countries so that they too could mitigate the effects of climate change.

53. Energy efficiency was a critical factor in lowering energy consumption and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and in increasing industrial competitiveness. At the same time, introduction of environmentally sound and energy-efficient models of production and consumption was very important for sustainable development. Kazakhstan was systematically identifying energy wastage and opportunities to improve existing technologies and to make use of alternative energy resources. In 2006, it had adopted an ecological code to harmonize national ecological law with international agreements. The Government intended to intensify its control over observance of environmental legislation during the development of oilfields and was considering the idea of international "green oil" certificates, which would require rigid observance of ecological standards during hydrocarbon extraction.

54. **Mr. Alahraf** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the developed countries and international financial institutions needed to increase aid to developing countries. Rural agricultural development was particularly important. Desertification claimed more arable land each year, particularly in Africa, and had displaced millions of people. Financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building provided under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be stepped up to encourage projects to reclaim land and restore vegetative cover. His own country had expended much effort and resources on confronting the challenges posed by desertification.

55. Support needed to be maintained for the UNDP country programmes, particularly in the area of training personnel to design and implement sustainable development plans. Equitable macroeconomic policies that took into account the interests of the poor played a major role. The Annual Ministerial Review and the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the recent substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva had reiterated that eradicating poverty was the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. He stressed that rural and agricultural development were integral to achieving food security, and that measures to combat climate change needed to be balanced against the needs of developing countries and their right to development. The regional United Nations economic commissions had an important role to play, and he welcomed the establishment by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) of the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division. He called for technological assistance to help African States incorporate the latest scientific advances into their development plans, and for enhanced cooperation between ECA and the African Union.

56. **Mr. Boureima** (Niger) noted that the issue of desertification was of crucial importance for his country. His delegation welcomed the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the Convention, recently approved by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which would cover the period 2008-2018. Its adoption bore witness to the unswerving commitment of the international community to maintain momentum in combating a phenomenon whose scale and seriousness made it a real threat, in particular to the populations of the developing countries.

57. That firm commitment should find expression in concrete actions capable of permanently reversing the trend towards environmental degradation. That would presuppose that adequate and predictable resources were provided to the countries affected and the

international bodies assisting them. In that connection, all Parties to the Convention, in particular those blessed with resources, had an obligation to demonstrate the political will needed to provide the secretariat of the Convention with a serious budget. In any event, the developing countries, owing to their limited financial capacity and their technological backwardness, counted greatly on partner support to implement their national or regional initiatives. That was certainly the case for the Niger, three quarters of whose area was desert. Drought and desertification had therefore always been a major concern for his country, which had taken a number of steps in response.

58. Such steps ranged from sectoral approaches to combat desertification to the creation in 1996 of the National Council for Sustainable Development, to act as the institutional framework.

59. The Niger had also adopted a National Environmental Plan for Sustainable Development, which in turn was one of the underpinning programmes of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the second iteration of which had been approved by the Niger's development partners on 26 October. The Niger thus had need of assistance from the international community in order to make the plan an effective instrument to combat desertification and climate change, enabling it to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

60. **Ms. Al-Mansoori** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country's success in turning its harsh desert landscape into a green space with first-rate oceanfront facilities was the product of a comprehensive national environmental strategy, along the lines of Agenda 21, that involved well-drilling, forestation and ambitious rural development projects all over the country. All development was undertaken with a view to reducing pollution and preserving wildlife, and the latest energy production methods were employed to refine low-emission fuels and encourage their use in vehicles. There was a solar-powered desalinization project, and the Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company was building the world's first fully "green" city, which would be powered entirely by renewable energy sources. Low-energy building techniques were being used and "green buildings" standards had been mandated for the Emirate of Dubai beginning in 2008. Abu Dhabi had just been chosen by UNEP as the site for launching the fourth Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-4), partly in recognition of the pioneering Abu Dhabi Initiative on Environmental Information. She reiterated that the major responsibility for tackling climate change fell on the developed States, as the major producers of greenhouse emissions, and asked that they and the international financial institutions step up development assistance to the developing States to help them confront the environmental problems brought on by poverty, disease, conflict, foreign occupation and arms races.

61. **Mr. Park** Chun-kyoo (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation welcomed the current vigorous discussion on sustainable development issues, in particular their environmental features, and was also pleased that the concept of sustainable development, and strategies for its attainment, had been gaining acceptance as universally shared goals.

62. Efforts should be continued and even accelerated to achieve sustainable development. Shared solutions should be sought, with countries working in concert across all sectors so that environmental sustainability became a key factor in the attainment of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and Agenda 21.

63. Furthermore, countries should strengthen efforts to design and put into practice national sustainable development strategies, including voluntary peer review, while at the same time drawing benefit from discussion forums and international organs such as the Commission on Sustainable Development. Discussions at the Commission's sixteenth session in May 2008 could be expected to identify barriers and constraints to sustainable development, as well as to provide an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and best practices. It was to be hoped that the session would revitalize the valuable tradition of building consensus in the sustainable development field.

64. Climate change was intensifying around the world, impeding efforts to attain economic and social development, and would more severely affect the most vulnerable countries and their populations. The Bali Climate Change Conference to be held in December should establish a road map for the post-2012 framework by advancing efforts towards a low-carbon economy. The future framework should be comprehensive yet flexible enough to allow all nations to enlist in a shared global effort, and should encompass all facets of climate change, including

mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology. Given the complexity of global environmental issues, it was imperative to coordinate the environmental activities of the United Nations and to ensure their coherence. Strengthening UNEP and supporting its mandate would provide improved policy guidance and help to set priorities with a strong scientific base.

65. **Mr. Mirilovic** (Serbia) gave some information about the recently concluded sixth ministerial conference "Environment for Europe", held in Belgrade in October. In the ECE region, air pollution was still very high, while more than 100 million people still lacked access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Notwithstanding energy efficiency improvements and an increased use of renewable resources, energy consumption and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions had increased, while the decline of biodiversity and ecosystem loss continued. The Ministers attending the Conference had called for further improvements of indicator-based environmental assessments and reporting in the region. They had undertaken to pay special attention to strengthening environmental institutions and organizations, to creating and implementing policy instruments, and to capacity-building. They had also underlined the importance of establishing a subregional centre for climate change monitoring in Belgrade and expressed their firm intent to cooperate with other regions by sharing lessons learned and experience gained.

66. It was regrettable that the Commission on Sustainable Development had not reached agreement at its fifteenth session on several important issues, in particular an international agreement on energy efficiency. Serbia hoped that the positions of the negotiating groups would be more flexible at the next session.

67. As a member of the Mountain Partnership, Serbia supported the efforts to allocate more funds for sustainable development of mountain regions. Special efforts should be made to reduce development disparities between those and other regions, by investing in projects that accentuated the relative advantages of the mountains, particularly nature-based tourism. At the same time, regional and multilateral cooperation should be improved, the more so as mountains often spread across national borders. Serbia encouraged the Global Meeting of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions to foster exchanges of experience and expertise among mountain regions of the world. A draft law ratifying the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians had been sent to the Serbian Parliament and it was expected that it would be adopted soon.

68. Serbia was among the countries most threatened by climate change. In the last two decades, it had experienced a number of droughts, and was now finding it increasingly difficult to renew the protective cover of vegetation, which was leading to land degradation, of varying intensity, affecting over 80 per cent of the country. It was therefore expected that the draft law ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification would be adopted soon.

69. Having recently ratified the Kyoto Protocol, Serbia called on all parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to participate actively and constructively in the Bali Climate Change Conference in December, with a view to achieving a comprehensive post-2012 agreement by the end of 2009.

Agenda item 55: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/62/8, A/62/219 and A/62/339)

70. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on its twenty-first session (A/62/8); the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat II) (A/62/219); and the report of the Secretary-General on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2007/58), said that considerable progress had been made in the past year to strengthen the ability of UN-Habitat to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Statement of Principles and Commitments and Global Plan of Action: The Habitat Agenda (Habitat Agenda).

71. That progress included two landmark decisions reflecting many of the recommendations made by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. One of those decisions, which was directly relevant to United

Nations reform, was the decision of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat to adopt a Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013. The strategic component was driven by an ambitious vision and a robust road map for sustainable urbanization. The vision was of a world in which one out of two urban dwellers would be able to gain access to decent housing, clean water and basic sanitation, and in which humanity could engage in social, economic and cultural pursuits without compromising the ability of future generations to do so. In an increasingly and rapidly urbanizing world, such a vision and road map were critical to the attainment of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. The vision was realistic because the road map for the implementation of the Plan was guided by the principle of enhanced partnerships rather than by the capacities of the United Nations or UN-Habitat alone.

72. Over the following six years, UN-Habitat would endeavour to play a truly catalytic role to marshal the goodwill, know-how and resources of all spheres of government, civil society, international, regional and domestic financial institutions and the private and community sectors in order to focus sharply on the key determinants for sustainable urbanization and inclusive urban development. Those determinants were pro-poor land and housing, participatory planning and governance, environmentally sound infrastructure and services and innovative housing and urban finance. Work in those areas would be spearheaded by a global campaign on sustainable urbanization to mobilize political will and commitment.

73. To follow up the Governing Council's decision, and with the endorsement of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, UN-Habitat was collaborating with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on matters concerning urban crime prevention and safety. Those efforts would lead to joint activities on the ground to improve safety, security and justice for all, especially for the one out of three urban dwellers living in the world's slums. UN-Habitat was working very closely with the World Health Organization to address health issues in cities, particularly those affecting the urban poor, and was expanding its collaboration with the World Bank within the framework of the Cities Alliance initiative. Increasing collaboration with regional development banks had thus far resulted in over US $1.5 billion in follow-up investment in pro-poor water and sanitation projects.

74. The vision driving the strategic component of the Medium-Term Plan was also achievable because sustainable urbanization was an achievable objective. The Plan built upon the growing realization of the international community that urbanization, despite its chaotic manifestations, represented a unique opportunity to support economic growth and social advancement in a globalizing world economy. UN-Habitat was proud to be associated with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which, in the State of the World Population 2007 report focused on the theme "Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth". UN-Habitat was also pleased that the UNDP Human Development Report, 2006 on water, had taken note of UN-Habitat's 2003 triennial report, Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals, to further amplify and popularize UN-Habitat's findings on the very sad state of affairs in urban slums on those issues. Those examples demonstrated that UN-Habitat, through partnerships and as a grassroots actor, would bring to the fore issues that could then be adopted by other partners.

75. On the institutional front, the Medium-Term Plan aimed to place UN-Habitat at the forefront of reform. Management excellence was a key component of the Plan, and accountability, transparency, results-based monitoring and reporting would become the rule, not the exception. Given the rapid growth of UN-Habitat over the past five years, the programme did not have all the requisite expertise in house. She therefore appealed to Member States in a position to do so to provide additional resources in cash or in kind to help implement state-of-the-art management processes and reform befitting UN-Habitat's new status.

76. The financial regulations and rules governing the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation had been revised in 2006. By its resolution 21/10, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat had decided to introduce experimental reimbursable seeding operations to facilitate the financing of pro-poor housing and urban development. The landmark resolution enabled the United Nations system, for the first time, to support the efforts of Member States to scale up pilot slum upgrading and low-income housing initiatives through innovative financing mechanisms.

77. The intention of the new operations was not to establish a new financial institution or create new debt instruments. The objective was to work with existing financial institutions at the country level to lower the perceived risks associated with lending to the urban poor. That would be accomplished by a wide array of confidence-building measures, including policy advisory services, capacity-building assistance, and credit enhancement in the form of guarantees combining public investments, private capital, and the efforts of low-income households.

78. UN-Habitat hoped that the facility would remove one of the long-lasting barriers to urban poverty reduction and thereby enable and empower the urban poor to leverage their savings and assets to create wealth through housing and to become true stakeholders in society.

79. With support from Members States, UN-Habitat would be in a position swiftly to mobilize private sector finance to deliver decent housing for low-income people. Under the Slum Upgrading Facility pilot projects, private sector banks had already agreed to provide long-term financing for low-income housing, such as women's housing cooperatives in the United Republic of Tanzania and Kenya. Technical assistance was being provided by the Chinese authorities to establish local construction firms capable of producing mid-rise buildings at low cost to enable the poor to remain on prime land close to the central business district in the city of Yangzhou. UN-Habitat had recently reached an agreement with United States private sector actors to mobilize resources for affordable low-income housing in Latin America through loans from domestic banks.

80. The majority of human beings currently lived in cities, and the process was accelerating. That transformation had a direct bearing on the strategies required to attain the Millennium Development Goals, in view of the urbanization of poverty. The international community had both a moral and ethical responsibility to make cities more equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

81. World Habitat Day had focused in 2007 on the challenges of urban safety and security. Inequality bred insecurity because it was based on institutional bottlenecks that prevented people from reaching their full potential. Invariably, that bred discontent and hostility, endangering society. In addition to crime and violence, lack of secure tenure and substantial vulnerability to natural disasters, to a great extent affected poor people more than the rich. Resilience was highly correlated to income both within and between nations.

82. It was no coincidence that climate change had emerged at the forefront of international debate at the same time, and virtually at the same pace, as the world was becoming more urbanized. Urbanization caused irreversible changes in production and consumption patterns: cities were already responsible for 75 per cent of global energy consumption and 80 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Roughly half of the emissions were caused by the burning of fossil fuels for urban transport; the other half came from heating, cooling and maintaining buildings and homes. The measures envisaged at the global and national levels to address those issues had yet to be accompanied by concerted measures at the city and local levels. Immediate action was required to make cities and towns more sustainable through appropriate land-use plans, transport modalities and building designs. Such measures would have a major impact on the pace of global warming.

83. At the same time, immediate adaptation measures were essential in order to reduce vulnerability. To that end, cities and settlements must be properly planned in order to prevent loss of lives and property. The people most vulnerable to the impact of climate change were the urban poor, who contributed least to climate change. Accordingly, adaptation and mitigation had always been part of UN-Habitat's core mandate namely to improve housing and urban development in order to reduce poverty and make cities and settlements safer, more sustainable and more resilient. Action to combat climate change must occur at the local level. Policymakers, planners, environmental specialists and citizens should join forces to place cities and urban issues at the forefront of the sustainable development agenda and of national development agendas. The time had come to place the urban agenda at the centre of the international community's deliberations and to institute a task monitoring system to enable all partners to work together to meet the challenges of rapid urbanization, urban poverty and climate change.

84. Preparations had begun for the fourth session of the World Urban Forum, to be hosted by the Government of China in Nanjing in October 2008. With the theme "harmonious urbanization", it would

focus on ways to secure balanced territorial development and rural-urban linkages. She hoped that Member States and all Habitat Agenda partners would prepare adequately for the Forum and use the occasion to showcase their best practices so that participants could learn from one another in the interests of delivering the Habitat Agenda.

85. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that she wished to comment on references to her country in the UN-Habitat report *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security*. Published at the beginning of October 2007, the report had generated wide public comment in Brazil and abroad on account of the data it presented on the crime rates in the State of São Paulo. However, the figures given related to the year 1999 and the crime rate in São Paulo had steadily declined since then. It had been 18.39 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2006 and was expected to go down even further in 2007, to 11.8 deaths per 100,000.

86. Brazil's new gun law, the Disarmament Statute, had contributed significantly to the decline in deaths from firearms in the entire country. According to a joint study by the Ministries of Health and Justice, the death rate from guns had dropped by 18 per cent since the Statute had been enacted in 2003, saving some 24,000 lives.

87. She hoped that UN-Habitat would revise the data in the report in order to convey a more accurate picture of crime prevention and security in Brazil.

88. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)) expressed regret that outdated data had been published, explaining that the error had occurred because a number of countries had not joined the Global Urban Observatory. UN-Habitat would be pleased to update the data for the State of São Paulo to reflect the situation more accurately.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

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Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

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Agenda item 55: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (*continued*)

Agenda item 56: Globalization and interdependence

(a) Globalization and interdependence

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/62/343, A/62/356, A/62/486, A/C.2/62/2 and A/C.2/62/L.5)

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(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) noted that the industrial sector currently accounted for around one third of global primary energy consumption and the related carbon dioxide emissions. Industry's energy use and carbon emissions were both projected to grow by around 2 per cent a year over the next two decades, making it vital to tackle vigorously the way energy was used in industry.

2. Climate change solutions must be found that reduced emissions, while supporting economic growth and employment opportunities. While it was true that there was no instant solution, significantly improving industrial energy efficiency was one area where those objectives were fully compatible. More efficient components might bring about energy efficiency gains in the range of 2 to 5 per cent, but measures to optimize entire systems could achieve efficiency gains of 20 to 30 per cent. UNIDO was working to promote the adoption of national and international energy management standards that would facilitate the achievement of that level of improvement, and to build the capacity to comply with such standards in a way that supported core industry values of cost reduction, increased productivity and global competitiveness.

3. There were those who focused on the potential negative impacts of biofuels, in particular the possible conflict between growing crops for food or for fuel. There were also those who saw only the positive impacts, whether reductions in carbon emissions or increased energy security for oil-importing countries. Understanding both of those viewpoints, UNIDO saw its role as helping to define how bioenergy could be utilized in a sustainable way. Although the lack of reliable and affordable energy was widely seen as one of the main barriers to rural development, many poor people in rural areas were unlikely to be connected to the electricity grid in the near future. Consequently, and given the frequently high cost of bringing fossil fuels to remote communities, UNIDO promoted the use of renewable energy sources (solar, biomass and hydro power) to power mini-grids.

4. Many small island developing States depended almost exclusively on imported fossil fuels and therefore had retail electricity prices among the highest in the world. UNIDO helped them move to a more sustainable energy paradigm by developing renewable energy and more efficient energy sources. UNIDO was fully committed to working with all the members of UN-Energy, which had been established to ensure coherence in the United Nations system's multidisciplinary response to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the field of energy.

5. **Mr. Loayza Barea** (Bolivia) noted that, since decisions taken in one country might affect the

ecological balance of others, environmental problems did not stop at frontiers but impacted the destiny and interests of all. Any solutions proposed on climate change must be in strict harmony with nature.

6. Education was essential at all levels as the principal tool to raise people's consciousness, with a view to promoting a change in consumption patterns. The organization, coherence and institutional capacity of a new model of education needed to have a basis in community action.

7. The objective of such a model was to bring about an understanding of the complex relationship of the environment and the effects of human action. That would make it possible for mankind to acquire knowledge, values and behaviours that would preserve the quality of the environment and at the same time to solve the problems that it was already confronting and that would inevitably arise in the future.

8. The current model of development based on unlimited economic growth was unviable and incompatible with the sustainability of the planet. Bolivia had therefore decided to take from the earth only what it needed, so as to guarantee support for the present and for future generations.

9. The vulnerable developing countries faced additional limitations such as poor quality of life and lack of basic services, so that the limited resources available to them had to be used essentially to combat poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and unemployment.

10. The shared commitment clearly expressed in the High-level Event on Climate Change imposed a duty to take the right decisions. The necessary financial resources should be provided principally by the developed countries on the basis of their greater responsibility for the world's environmental degradation. There should be a change-over to clean, efficient and renewable technologies in order to support the policies pursued by the developing countries. In that context, the outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference in December must not be a road map or a wish list but a clear mandate to promote the urgent implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

11. The shared initiatives on climate change would have to be closely aligned with the policies that had been defined with regard to disaster prevention, so as to assist in overcoming natural disasters by means of comprehensive solutions, as well as the appropriate use of modern and traditional technologies to guarantee food production and security in the face of realities such as crop displacement, productivity losses, the possible appearance of new pests, and so on.

12. **Ms. Halperin** (Israel) said that, while sustainable development was of fundamental importance for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, developing countries faced various obstacles in their efforts to increase agricultural productivity, reduce rural poverty, and combat drought and desertification.

13. The recent report of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) showed that growth coming from the agriculture sector contributed to eradicating poverty twice as much as growth from elsewhere. Consequently, agricultural research and technological improvements were crucial to increasing agricultural productivity and returns to farmers, which would reduce poverty and meet future food needs at reasonable prices without irreversible degradation of natural resources. Agricultural growth required not only research and technology but also appropriate national policies. Israel was committed to sharing with developing countries its experience in strengthening agricultural productivity and advancing agricultural technologies and capacity-building programmes.

14. Promoting small-scale enterprise was another means of eradicating poverty. In that connection, Israel underscored the importance of women's empowerment, since women accounted for 70 per cent of the 1.4 million people living in poverty. Israel promoted sustainable development in self-employed entrepreneurial capacities through MASHAV, its Centre for International Cooperation.

15. The Convention to Combat Desertification could provide a reminder that environment and development were not in conflict; rather, it was the healthy, functional environment that sustained development. Desertification represented a severe impairment of the provision of ecosystem services in the drylands, a result of development that compromised the long-term environmental benefits for short-term gains. At the same time, environmental ecosystem services were underpinned by biodiversity, and conservation of the dryland unique biodiversity was therefore critical for attaining sustainable development of drylands.

16. Israel's long-standing policy to combat desertification included extensive tree planting in

semi-arid zones, cultivation of desert regions, strict limits on grazing and an aggressive national water management programme. Israel had recently started a number of initiatives to share the benefits of its experience. In November 2006, the first United Nations conference in the State of Israel had been held on Deserts and Desertification: Challenges and Opportunities, which would be followed by similar events.

17. Achieving sustainable development in drylands would also reduce vulnerability to climate change. Israel was committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions on a voluntary basis. The recent events and initiatives at United Nations Headquarters had provided excellent opportunities to discuss some of the many shared global challenges. Similarly, the deliberations of the Second Committee should lay the groundwork for the negotiations on a post-Kyoto arrangement after 2012. Harnessing the political will of all stakeholders in a multilateral process remained the best way to collectively plan the next steps in the global response to climate change.

18. **Mr. Kakar** (Permanent Observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)) expressed concern that biodiversity was being lost at unprecedented rates, the majority of the planet's essential ecosystem services were degraded and unsustainably managed, and levels of carbon dioxide continued to increase with serious impacts on the world's climate. The need to achieve sustainable development by linking its environmental, economic and social pillars was more acute than ever before. The Union urged the General Assembly to call for decisive action in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, through resource mobilization, capacity-building and integration of environmental sustainability in development strategies and policies. Welcoming the level of attention given by the international community in recent months to the serious threat of climate change, including the thematic debate held by the General Assembly and the High-level Event convened by the Secretary-General, IUCN applauded the resultant emphasis on the linkages between climate change and the ability of countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals. It hoped that the political momentum created would evolve into the needed action at the forthcoming Climate Change Conference in Bali. It urged Parties to agree on a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive post-2012 framework by 2009. IUCN also stressed the need for due consideration of the links between climate change and biodiversity, especially the potential effects of climate change response strategies on biodiversity.

19. IUCN was concerned at the failure to reach a consensus text on energy at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. While the current energy mix was contributing to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, society was at the brink of a significant change in energy production and consumption patterns, which would create openings for new technologies and other innovations. It was important to ensure that the latter resulted in energy systems that were environmentally sound, economically viable and socially equitable. Certain processes associated with biofuel production, particularly those involving deforestation or land conversion, could result in increased greenhouse gas emissions as well as in severe consequences for biodiversity. Robust standards and criteria for alternative fuels were therefore needed, taking full account of the range of environmental and social impacts associated with their full life cycle.

20. Increased local, national and international efforts would be needed to achieve the energy elements of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. IUCN urged Governments to ensure that the Commission on Sustainable Development contributed at its full potential at its sixteenth session in 2008.

21. IUCN welcomed the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the recognition of the links among climate change, desertification and human well-being. IUCN also welcomed the progress in implementing the decisions taken in 2006 by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the progress towards an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. As the latter was critical to the achievement of greater sustainability and equity in the use of biodiversity, IUCN urged the Parties to conclude the negotiations at the earliest possible time, and before 2010.

22. IUCN stressed the need to make progress on the international environmental governance agenda, especially in the context of the General Assembly's consultation process on the institutional framework of

the environmental activities of the United Nations system and its consideration of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. It stressed the need to strengthen UNEP as the environmental pillar of the United Nations system; to enhance implementation at national level through stronger collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); to promote coordination among multilateral environmental agreements; and to make sustainable development a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, as decided in General Assembly resolution 57/253.

23. **Mr. Buffa** (Paraguay) said that his delegation attached major importance to the reference to energy for sustainable development in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Paraguay, a landlocked developing country that was highly dependent on imports of fossil fuels to transport its products to international markets, was considering an increase in its domestic production of fuels of vegetable origin, which would make it possible gradually to reduce its dependence on oil and its by-products and at the same time to save foreign currency that could be used to finance the country's development, particularly in agriculture.

24. Paraguay had a national biofuel programme, the aim of which was to create jobs in rural areas and provide renewable sources of fuels as an alternative to oil-based fuels, which were becoming increasingly expensive.

25. In the case of Paraguay, the production of alternative fuels did not affect food production or lead to greater impoverishment of its population. On the contrary, it was having beneficial effects on the country's economic development and improving social conditions. That was possible only provided that the country could control its very high production and transportation costs and at the same time maintain its significant position as a net provider of food to other countries and thus continue contributing effectively to food security at the global level.

26. **Mr. Cameron-Glickenhaus** (Palau) said that, for his country, sustainable development meant developing in a way that preserved its unique ecosystems, and the food and other services they provided. Ecosystems were interconnected in ways about which there was still much to learn, and they did not end at the boundaries of countries' exclusive economic zones. The high seas contained a wealth of vulnerable marine ecosystems which supported diverse species, and also provided food for tuna, the backbone of the economies of many island nations. Bottom trawling posed a major threat to those vulnerable marine ecosystems, being responsible for 95 per cent of world-wide damage to seamounts. General Assembly resolution 61/105 required States and regional fisheries management organizations to take measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from bottom fishing. The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization had adopted interim measures that had done much to eliminate that unsustainable practice, and Palau urged others to follow that lead.

27. Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia had agreed to conserve 30 per cent of their near-shore marine resources, and 20 per cent of their land resources, by 2020. The project, the first of its kind in the world, covered 6.7 million square miles of ocean and would help protect 463 coral species. The countries concerned would not be able to achieve those goals without international assistance, in the form of funding and expertise, to identify vulnerable areas for conservation and to devise enforcement and protection mechanisms.

28. For Palau, climate change posed an existential threat. As the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases rose, temperatures increased, the seas rose, the oceans acidified and corals bleached. Thus, global warming threatened to destroy the world's coral reefs, which in the case of Palau would be tantamount to the destruction of the country. The reefs were central to Palau's economy and vital to its food security. Their destruction would lead inevitably to the migration of the people.

29. Together, the small island developing States produced less than 0.02 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, but they would be among the countries most devastated by climate change. Consequently, Palau stressed the absolute need to reach an agreement on a set of quantified emission reduction targets for the post-2012 period. Those targets must reflect the urgency of the situation and must be consistent with a mitigation framework that protected the most vulnerable parties to the Convention. Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration must be stabilized as far below 450 ppm carbon dioxide equivalent as possible. The post-2012 regime must

mitigate the impacts of climate change on small island developing States as one of the key benchmarks of its adequacy and effectiveness. The survival of Palau, and the world's ability to achieve sustainable development, were dependent upon serious global efforts being made at Bali and beyond.

30. **Mr. Al Sharji** (Kuwait) commended the cooperation and solidarity shown by the international community in its prompt response with extensive humanitarian operations to alleviate the impact of natural disasters. The United Nations and its agencies, programmes and offices had played an outstanding role.

31. Kuwait had been one of the first States to participate in disaster response by providing assistance within a bilateral framework to affected countries and regions. Over the past three years Kuwait had donated hundreds of millions of dollars to countries affected by the tsunami and by the earthquake in South Asia and to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. It had also provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial assistance to a number of Caribbean countries affected by Hurricane Wilma, to the Democratic Republic of Korea to help with the effects of flooding and to Pakistan to assist those affected by Typhoon Yasmin. Those sums were provided without deductions for transportation and administrative costs.

32. As natural disasters were tending to increase and caused heavy losses of life in addition to negative economic, social and environmental impacts, particularly in the developing countries, efforts should be made to respond to those disasters and contain the damage. It was also important to establish an effective regional early warning system.

33. The State of Kuwait would continue to provide aid on a bilateral and multilateral basis, both in mitigating the immediate effects of disasters and in reconstruction, either through the Government or through relief organizations such as the Kuwaiti Red Crescent and other non-governmental organizations.

34. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon) said that the High-level Event on Climate Change had been a welcome demonstration of the international community's increased awareness of that phenomenon and the extent of the challenge it posed. The international community had made an unprecedented commitment to efforts to safeguard the planet for present and future generations.

35. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had noted that Africa, the continent which caused the least pollution, could be the continent to suffer the most catastrophic consequences of climate change; it would also be the most vulnerable to its impacts because poverty limited its capacity to adapt. In Cameroon, the most significant impacts would be felt in the near future. The rise in sea level caused by flooding would threaten the mangrove, submerge the coastal areas, destroy biodiversity and displace populations and industrial property, causing very substantial financial losses. In the Sudano-Sahelian zone, the fauna in the Waza National Park was already diminishing, agricultural and husbandry output was declining and the incidence of diseases such as malaria, meningitis, typhoid, diarrhoea and cholera was rising. Further North, Lake Chad continued to shrink as a result of climate change and had already lost 90 per cent of its original surface area.

36. Cameroon had responded by ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and by including the relevant provisions in its sustainable development strategies. It had then defined a number of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to create and strengthen national capacities for managing the effects of climate change. In addition to the framework law on the environment, a national environment management plan had been prepared, supported by the national environment and sustainable development fund. A national biodiversity action plan and a national plan to combat desertification had also been prepared in 1999 and 2007, respectively. An observatory for climate change would soon be established.

37. In the area of energy, Cameroon had introduced sustainable management of its natural resources, was introducing technological changes and was expanding hydropower. It would be implementing a number of projects, including the construction of a gas power plant, a reservoir dam and a hydroelectric power plant.

38. In the northern and coastal areas, the Government was harmonizing adaptation and mitigation strategies to be implemented by the public and by the authorities. The private sector and civil society were actively involved in a number of projects, including the Sudanese savannah project on reforestation and environmental education in the north and far north of Cameroon. In that context, Operation Green Sahel had been relaunched through the national reforestation

programme. At the local level and in the context of decentralized cooperation, the Government was allocating forest areas to community structures as a way of directly involving local populations in the management of their forest assets. Activities relating to the use of renewable resources in the Congo Basin forest raised the issue of deforestation and the necessary balance between environmental preservation and efforts to enhance socio-economic growth.

39. Implementation of all the initiatives mentioned required significant human, technical and financial resources that were beyond the capacity of Cameroon in view of its many different priorities. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), held in February 2007 in Nairobi, had called for an increase in aid to Africa on account of the circumstances and real needs of the region. It also appreciated the Governing Council's decision to assess new measures to reduce the risks posed to human health and the environment by mercury. As for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the States concerned had insufficient resources available for implementation.

40. The Bali Conference should make use of all the efforts and commitments of the international community and translate them into an agreement that took into account the legitimate concerns of the developing countries and would safeguard the global environment for present and future generations.

Agenda item 55: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/62/8, A/62/219 and A/62/339)

41. **Ms. Fakhr-Uz-Zaman** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the challenges of urbanization had never been more urgent, as by 2007 half of humanity would be living in towns and cities for the first time in history. By 2030 the proportion would increase to two thirds.

42. The number of slum-dwellers was increasing exponentially and was currently estimated at one billion in the developing world. The vast majority lacked safe housing, access to water and sanitation, a modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal services. Urbanization also brought a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems, including inappropriate consumption and production patterns. Unchecked, it was a threat to the sustainable livelihood of mankind. Urgent attention should be given to the issue of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all, especially in view of the linkages with poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

43. UN-Habitat was actively assisting Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in relation to target 10 on water and sanitation and target 11 on slum upgrading. UN-Habitat should be provided with the financial and technical support required to meet the growing demands for assistance at both national and regional levels. The Programme played an important role in achieving sustainable development, but unfortunately the resources allocated to it were disproportionate to the task.

44. The resource mobilization strategy of UN-Habitat had brought a steady increase in resources over the past six years. Nevertheless, the continued inequity and unpredictability of funding, in view of the imbalance in earmarked contributions as well as dependence on a small number of donors, hampered the Programme's ability to function in accordance with the national priorities of programme countries. Despite the overall increase of 10 per cent in the total voluntary contributions received by UN Habitat, which had amounted to $126.0 million in 2006, non-earmarked contributions remained at the $10 million mark. While aggressive fund-raising efforts had led to multi-year pledges totalling $57.1 million for the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, only $20.1 million had been pledged for the Slum Upgrading Facility. Water and sanitation had to be addressed along with slum upgrading in an integrated manner, particularly at the implementation level. The thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had called for a holistic approach.

45. She commended the countries that had made multi-year pledges and reiterated the call for the international donor community and financial institutions to support UN-Habitat, its Slum Upgrading Facility and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund with an increase in non-earmarked, predictable and timely

financial contributions. The Secretary-General should increase the regular budget of UN-Habitat, which amounted to only 10 per cent of the total contributions currently received. The Group of 77 and China would give favourable consideration to the Secretary-General's proposal in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

46. Progress had been made at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, with consensus resolutions on guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, guiding principles on access to basic services for all, urban youth development, women's land and property rights and access to finance, and African fund/financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading. The approval of the biennial work programme and budget and the efforts to strengthen the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Programme should facilitate the overall implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Other important developments included the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 and the experimental reimbursable seeding operations for financing low-income housing and urban development.

47. An appropriate response to human settlements could also be fast-tracked by adequate capacity-building at regional and national levels, which could be done partly through sharing of experiences, common regional policy formulation and implementation within the context of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, she expressed support for the ongoing ministerial meetings at the regional level on housing and urban development, which focused on mainstreaming the urban dimension of the Habitat Agenda and the related internationally agreed development goals.

48. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, considerably reduced the gains made in the area of human settlements. In view of the invaluable experience of UN-Habitat in preparedness and recovery measures, it should encourage the early involvement of human settlements experts in the assessment and development of prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes to support the efforts of developing countries affected by natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies, through its involvement in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and in collaboration with the relevant United Nations agencies. The international community should also enhance the quality and quantity of ODA and organize technology transfer, capacity-building, enhanced market access and increased foreign direct investment to developing countries and assistance in solving their external debt problems.

49. It was imperative for the international community to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda as it focused on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and poverty eradication. UN-Habitat and all development partners should play a major role in strengthening the efforts of the developing countries in key areas for slum improvement, slum prevention and urban poverty reduction.

50. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation on human settlements was an important component of the global agenda for sustainable development. She supported the strengthening of UN-Habitat as the key United Nations entity in that area and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the human settlement goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration and in the Johannesburg Implementation Plan.

51. At its twenty-first session, the UN-Habitat Governing Council had adopted an important Medium-term Strategy and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013. Her country supported the strategic direction laid out in the Plan, the creation by 2013 of the necessary conditions for stabilization of slum growth, urban poverty reduction and reversal of the rising trend in the number of slum-dwellers. The Plan would help to focus the activity of the Programme and facilitate a broadening of the financial base of the organization. One important element was the development and strengthening of UN-Habitat partnerships, especially with the Governments of interested countries at the national and local level. It was important to increase cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and strengthen the inter-agency coordination of UN-Habitat with UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other organizations and institutions of the United Nations system working in related areas.

52. It was essential to enhance the quality of the management of UN-Habitat by improving monitoring and accountability, introducing mechanisms to evaluate projects implemented under the Programme and further enhancing methods for collection and analysis of

statistics on human settlements. The Programme had contributed to the discussions at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, especially on issues such as energy for sustainable urban development and urban air pollution.

53. Her country had doubled its contribution to the budget of UN-Habitat since 2006. A new bilateral cooperation agreement between the Russian Federation and UN-Habitat had come into force and that cooperation would be further increased and enhanced in the future. Her delegation looked forward to the visit to the Russian Federation of Ms. Tibaijuka, UN-Habitat Executive Director, to participate in the first all-Russian housing forum.

54. **Mr. Liu** Yuyin (China) said that, since the beginning of implementation of the Habitat Agenda in 1996, the international community had made concerted efforts to address human settlement and environmental issues and had achieved some results. The twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat had adopted the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, which set out goals and visions for the future development of human settlements.

55. Problems such as housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure, lack of energy resources, deterioration of the environment and a weakened capacity to deal with disasters, remained serious challenges for many developing countries. By the end of the current year, the urban population was expected to outnumber the rural population. Urban problems such as poverty, environment, land management, water resources, sanitation and slums had become new concerns. Certain factors should be taken into account in order to expedite achievement of the twin goals set by Habitat II, namely "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world" and to implement the Habitat Agenda in a comprehensive and effective manner.

56. Poverty could be eradicated only by economic development that created the necessary conditions for resolving human settlement problems. The international community should work to achieve economic growth, poverty eradication and reduction of the gap between the rich and the poor. Human settlement policies, plans and priorities should be realistic and appropriate to specific national situations, capacities and conditions. Different countries faced different problems and they could learn by sharing their experiences. Human settlement development should abide by the principle of sustainability. Efforts to achieve economic development, social progress and environmental protection and the work on population growth and human settlements should be coordinated. The development and improvement of human settlements and protection of the natural environment should be integrated so that sustainable development could use resources and energy efficiently. The international community should honour its financial and technical commitments in order to create favourable conditions for the developing countries to achieve economic and social development and to build their capacity for working with human settlements. Human settlement developments in the urban and rural areas were interdependent and mutually complementary. Rural human settlements remained a weak link and a serious challenge to efforts to address human settlements in the world. Rural and urban development planning should be synchronized to promote further integration of rural and urban economies in order to achieve a balanced development of human habitats in both areas.

57. All members of society should work together on human settlements and awareness campaigns should encourage participation by the general public. Models of cooperation involving various channels and partners such as local governments, NGOs, private sectors, women and youth should be explored. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the development of human settlements and had worked to fulfil the commitments made at Habitat II and at the special session of the General Assembly on human settlements. Joining with local governments, enterprises, civil-society groups and local residents, and in keeping with its people-centred concept of development, the Chinese Government had been working to support the integrated and harmonious development of rural and urban areas, of economy and society and of man and nature. It had taken strong action to improve the living standards of its people and to create a safe, healthy and comfortable living environment for them.

58. The average housing space per person in China had increased in urban and rural areas and efforts had been made to improve the living environment. There were awards to honour those cities, towns, entities and individuals that had contributed to sustainable urban development and the improvement of human habitat in

China. In October 2008, the fourth session of the World Urban Forum would be held in Nanjing, China, on the theme of harmonious urbanization.

59. **Mr. Gehlot** (India) welcomed the adoption of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 of UN-Habitat and looked forward to early implementation of the resource mobilization plans. India had always highlighted the importance of housing finance for the poor and hoped that UN-Habitat would provide longer-term finance for domestic financial institutions.

60. India had always involved local authorities in decision-making and implementation, empowering local authorities to represent all sectors of society. It had recently launched an integrated programme to promote sustainable urban development, whose objectives included the provision of seven basic services to the poor: land tenure, affordable shelter, water, sanitation, education, health services and social security. There were also a number of programmes promoting affordable housing in rural areas. The problem of housing was intricately linked to the eradication of poverty and Government policies and programmes focused particularly on improving employment in rural areas. In the framework of South-South cooperation, India had been sharing appropriate technology, particularly in the field of cost-effective, environmentally friendly and disaster-resistant construction. India had also hosted the first session of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development in December 2006.

61. **Mr. Metalitsa** (Belarus) said that his country viewed UN-Habitat as an important partner in its efforts to improve living conditions in human settlements. Belarus was currently designing and implementing programmes for transforming small human settlements with little development capacity into agricultural and industrial villages and towns with adequate levels of housing and social and production infrastructure. The programmes included components for establishing conditions for small businesses, for the use of resource-conserving and environmentally friendly technologies in housing construction and utilities and for the upgrading of human settlements affected by the Chernobyl disaster. He invited UN-Habitat to consider the provision of technical assistance to Belarus for the design and implementation of those programmes.

62. **Ms. Halliyade** (Sri Lanka) said that the rapid expansion of cities had created severe challenges for many developing countries endeavouring to achieve sustainable development in the field of human settlements. Already, 30 per cent of the world's urban population lived in slums, with their numbers rising rapidly. Achievement of the Habitat II twin goals was therefore urgent.

63. The Millennium Development Goals included the time-bound targets of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers and providing access to safe drinking water. His Government was committed to the attainment of those targets and had launched a number of programmes designed to upgrade a total of 1.3 million housing units. State-financed housing programmes paid particular attention to the needs of inhabitants of underserved settlements, with provision for infrastructure and environmental facilities as well as housing. The Government had also launched a programme for the construction of new houses in each underserved village, accompanied by livelihood development programmes. The Government's poverty reduction strategy set great store by the provision of affordable quality housing for specific groups among the poorest, including plantation workers, fishing communities and communities displaced by disasters.

64. The Urban Settlements Improvement Programme helped the population of underserved urban settlements to improve their social and environmental infrastructures under the leadership of the community-based organizations in each settlement and with the guidance and support of central and local Government authorities and NGOs. The programme focused on the commitments set forth in the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals and, in particular, on slum upgrading, access to drinking water and sanitation, security of tenure and integrating gender perspectives in plans and policies.

65. With donor assistance, the Government was also conducting a number of water-supply and sanitation projects and, with UN-Habitat support, had prepared a 10-year Development Framework Programme covering all major sectors. Sri Lanka stood ready to enhance its cooperation with other countries in the field of human settlements development.

66. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that, unless substantial investments were made in housing and urban development over the next two decades, the

urban population in the developing world would be permanently ensnared in the urban poverty trap, aggravated by poor housing, sanitation and health, deficient nutrition and low productivity. Africa's share of the world's urban population was expected to rise to 17 per cent by 2015, owing partly to rural-urban migration, caused by declining agricultural productivity and lack of employment opportunities and physical and social infrastructure, and partly to natural population increase.

67. Ethiopia, with an urban population of 13 million, was experiencing all the problems associated with rapid urbanization. In response, the Government had enacted an Urban Development Policy designed to provide efficient public services, complement rural development, promote job-creating economic opportunities and stimulate participatory democracy. In addition, the National Five-Year Plan had been expanded to incorporate urban development and urban good governance programmes. Housing, schools, libraries, youth centres and sports facilities were being constructed, while the good governance aspect of the Policy focused on land and infrastructure management, financial management, development planning, organizational and human resources development, public participation and justice reform. Ethiopia had benefited from the Cities without Slums initiative and hoped that UN-Habitat would partner the Government in the task of improving the living conditions of the country's millions of slum-dwellers.

68. The Habitat Agenda called for enhanced cooperation, technology transfers, and exchanges of knowledge and experience designed to attain the goals of shelter for all and sustainable urbanization. In that context, Ethiopia called on the international community to contribute to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund so as to enable UN-Habitat to help the developing countries provide adequate shelter and basic services.

69. **Mr. Tharyat** (Indonesia) said that the Habitat Agenda had not made slums disappear; rather, with economic progress and the expansion of cities, they had continued to grow. Globalization had deepened and accelerated the urbanization process, often with negative consequences. The world's homeless now totalled over 100 million, posing a major social development challenge. Many steps had been taken to implement the Agenda but a great deal remained to be done, including sustained funding and improved mainstreaming of its goals into development processes. Success would depend on the availability of adequate, reliable funding and on sensitization of financial institutions and other creditors, including philanthropic entities, to the issues. Governments must in turn pledge budgetary allocations to ensure implementation of the Agenda, so that the poor could enjoy access to financial resources.

70. The use of resources must be tied to operational strategies that facilitated implementation of the Agenda, and recent landmark decisions taken at the twenty-first session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council would doubtless prove critical in that regard. UN-Habitat's role must be aligned with recipient countries' specific housing needs and it should therefore work with Governments on framing appropriate policies and strategies for resolving the problems of unregulated urbanization, focusing on implementing national housing projects rather than promoting its own. At the regional level, UN-Habitat should build effective national and local partnerships and establish a regional information network to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices. The Programme's Regional Office should be a catalyst for national action and a forum for discussion of urban improvement strategies, while the Millennium Development Goals should serve as indicators for results-based evaluation throughout the region. While commending UN-Habitat on its contributions to countries affected by natural disasters, his delegation enjoined it to redouble its efforts in that regard.

71. **Ms. Armanni-Sequi** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the Federation addressed the issue of adequate shelter for all primarily in the context of disasters, especially those involving climate change. At its forthcoming International Conference, IFRC would address the consequences of environmental hazards, including climate change, and would build opportunities for Government partnership with the Federation.

72. The provision of emergency shelter during natural disasters had required measures to increase IFRC shelter capacity and to support the wider shelter sector. IFRC had collaborative arrangements with UNHCR, UN-Habitat and other United Nations agencies, NGOs, and research institutions in order to promote greater global preparedness and predictability.

73. IFRC also supported existing and new shelter agency networks, research institutions and donors, as well as key collaborative initiatives to promote the sector. Steps had recently been taken to enhance the humanitarian and commercial sectors' involvement and to capitalize on potential financial and technical resources. IFRC enhanced national preparedness planning to include identification of shelter-sector assistance from humanitarian actors as part of State disaster-response operations, and convened emergency shelter clusters in a number of developing countries, also providing tools, basic materials and information on building techniques. The challenge of ensuring adequate shelter for all, even beyond the disaster context, was universally acknowledged. Urbanization must be addressed holistically, and the forthcoming World Urban Forum to be held in China would test Governments' political will. Where social violence was concerned, partnerships must be established with young people for the design and implementations of programmes involving them. IFRC would also like to share the results of its collaboration with other United Nations offices and agencies regarding the migrations that had so largely contributed to urbanization.

Agenda item 56: Globalization and interdependence (A/C.2/62/2)

(a) Globalization and interdependence (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/216 and A/62/303)

(b) Science and technology (A/62/136)

(c) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (A/62/85, A/62/116 and CAC/COSP/2006/12)

74. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of international commitments, policies and processes on the scope and implementation of national development strategies (A/62/303), said that globalization evoked hopes and fears alike, with many countries benefiting from it while others suffered from its negative consequences. Yet everyone could benefit if the challenge of ensuring equitable sharing of its burdens and blessings were addressed.

75. The focus of the report under consideration was the impact of external factors on domestic policymaking capacity. The report suggested ways of tailoring policies to changing domestic and external circumstances, of supporting developing countries' capacities to anticipate the implications of macroeconomic and trade policies, and of enhancing developing countries' institutional capacity fully to understand the implications of international obligations and processes and of enabling them to participate actively in global decision-making. All that clearly required the assistance of the international community and the United Nations system.

76. He urged the Committee to provide clear guidance regarding the focus of the report that the Secretary-General would submit to the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly with a view to its adoption of an action-oriented resolution that would help to illuminate a part of a complicated canvas. The Secretariat was ready to provide the required assistance.

77. **Ms. Tran-Nguyen** (Director, Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 20/205 concerning science and technology for development (A/62/136), said that advances in science and technology in areas crucial to human well-being had produced marked increases in productivity and per capita income in many countries and were central to achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals. With a view to building solid capabilities in science, technology and innovation, Governments of developing countries were investing more resources in development programmes targeting those capabilities and turning to international and regional organizations for policy and programme advice. The organizations were in turn seeking to improve their institutional capacity to respond. However, countries that lacked the skills and infrastructure to join the knowledge economy or failed to invest in building such capacity would fall far behind. Policymakers in the developing world must address that issue.

78. At its tenth session the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had taken steps to mobilize the participation of all stakeholders, including NGOs and business entities. As the focal point for the

United Nations system-wide follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, in May 2007 the Commission had adopted a multi-year work programme that would support the Commission in that effort and its work related to paragraph 60 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The work programme would also allow the Commission to maintain its unique role as a global forum for the examination of science and technology questions.

79. The Secretary-General's report highlighted some of the work of UNCTAD on science and technology. Science, technology and innovation policy reviews were designed to help developing countries identify policies and measures to integrate science and technology into their national development strategies and serve as effective tools for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Reviews were being finalized for Angola and Mauritania and were being initiated for Mauritius and Ghana. In Africa the reviews were carried out in collaboration with the Office of Science and Technology of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

80. "Connect Africa", a partnership established in 2004 in cooperation with the Swiss Centre de Technologies de l'Information (Information Technologies Centre), provided training on information and communication technologies to engineers, technicians and teachers in the least developed countries of Africa.

81. One of the sub-themes of UNCTAD XII, "Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: Mobilizing resources and harnessing knowledge for development", would address policy areas that must be tackled in order to enable more developing countries to benefit from the globalization of knowledge and technology.

82. **Mr. Vlassis** (Chief, Crime Conventions Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin (A/62/116), and the report of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/2006/12), said that there had been significant developments with respect to the fight against corruption since the Secretary-General's report had been finalized. The United Nations Convention against Corruption continued to enjoy strong political commitment from Member States, as demonstrated by the fact there were currently 103 States parties and 140 signatories.

83. The Conference of the States Parties to the Convention against Corruption had an ambitious work programme, proving its ability to cope with its comprehensive mandate and reach important political decisions. At its first session, held in December 2006, the Conference had stressed the importance of review of implementation of the Convention and the crucial role of information to be provided by States on the subject. Thus far 45 States had transmitted such information by means of the self-assessment checklist selected by the Conference as an information-gathering tool. A number of countries, especially developing and least developed countries, had used a software package designed to facilitate the process. The checklist would serve as the basis for consideration of the full-fledged review mechanism at the second session, to be held in January 2008 in Indonesia. The UNODC secretariat was testing various implementation review methods in a voluntary pilot programme involving 16 countries from all regions and would report its findings at that session.

84. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Technical Assistance of the Conference and the international cooperation workshop on technical assistance for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption which UNODC had convened in June 2007 had agreed that the Convention should be incorporated in the relevant development assistance programmes and be an integral part of overall governance programmes. The Working Group had also recommended the preparation of a comprehensive overview of technical assistance needs and resources, which should be made available to the Conference to assist it in its role as coordinator and facilitator of such assistance.

85. In August 2007, the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery had recommended the development of practical tools for asset recovery, including a database for legislation and judicial decisions, further analysis of legal and regulatory frameworks and a handbook. The Group had

also highlighted the importance of close cooperation between relevant agencies and the responsibility of the financial sector and had recommended the establishment of a global network of focal points for asset recovery, which should meet annually. UNODC worked closely with the Asian Development Bank, the Basel Institute on Governance and the World Bank to align and coordinate relevant initiatives.

86. Following the launch in September 2007 by UNODC and the World Bank of the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) initiative, the two partners had continued to shape the joint work programme and define the objectives and structure of the initiative. The StAR initiative would focus on capacity-building, inter alia by helping developing countries to strengthen their prosecuting 'agencies and bring their laws into compliance with the Convention. It would also work to bring financial centres into compliance with anti-money-laundering legislation and regulations, strengthen the capacity of and enhance cooperation between financial intelligence units around the world, and explore innovative forms of short-term technical assistance for complex large-scale proceedings, with an emphasis on capacity-building. The Friends of StAR, an advisory group of experienced and influential individuals from developed and developing countries, would guide the initiative and advocate for the implementation of the asset recovery provisions of the Convention and for cooperation between countries.

87. Political momentum with respect to the Convention was very strong and the outcome of the work of the working groups to which he had referred gave cause for optimism that the Conference of the Parties would make tangible progress regarding its implementation at its second session. The General Assembly should strongly urge Member States to adopt decisions at that session by consensus and to do their utmost to implement the Convention.

88. **Mr. Diarra** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that despite the commitments to the least developed countries made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, at the high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and at the Ministerial Conference of Least Developed Countries on the theme "Making globalization work for least developed countries", those countries remained marginalized from the mainstream development process and failed fully to benefit from globalization owing to the inherent constraints of their economies, weak competitiveness and discriminatory multilateral rules and policies governing trade, investment, finance, migration and labour.

89. In 2005 the least developed countries had accounted for almost 12 per cent of the world's population but had accounted for only 0.69 per cent of global output. He provided statistics demonstrating that the share of the least developed countries in world trade had barely improved over the years because of tariff barriers and the fact that they were unable to make significant use of arrangements under the Generalized System of Preferences, owing largely to supply-side constraints, stringent rules of origin affecting clothing and sanitary and phytosanitary standards applied to food products.

90. Although South-South trade currently accounted for 40 per cent of developing country exports and 11 per cent of world trade and had provided an opportunity to increase export earnings, many least developed countries had failed to benefit from such trade owing in large measure to market entry barriers of developing countries. Moreover, lack of progress in multilateral trade negotiations could lead to the further proliferation of regional trade agreements, of which there were already a considerable number in the South, thereby creating a "spaghetti bowl" of rules of origin and discriminatory trade taxes.

91. FDI inflows to the least developed countries had increased dramatically since 1990 but were concentrated mainly in the oil and mining industries and in only a few countries. Attracting FDI was very difficult for many of the least developed countries owing to their fragile political systems, weak regulatory and legal framework, weak institutions, poor infrastructure, weak human capital assets and relatively undeveloped private sector and local markets.

92. ODA, still the major source of external finance for the least developed countries, had almost doubled since 1990 but had remained at only 0.08 per cent of donors' GNI, the same level as in 2003 and below that of 1990. Furthermore, the share of ODA dedicated to

economic infrastructure and productive sectors had declined by almost one half.

93. Migrant worker remittances constituted the second largest source of financial flows to the least developed countries. Remarkably, since 1990 South-South remittances to least developed countries had exceeded North-South remittances, owing primarily to proximity and community ties with large developing countries such as India, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. The United States of America remained the largest single source of remittances to least developed countries and significant remittances flowed to them from the European Union area. However, migration from the least developed countries often resulted in a significant loss of skilled workers.

94. The achievement of the ambitious goals and targets for reducing poverty and hunger in the least developed countries established in the Millennium Development Goals and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 were in serious jeopardy. Sustained globalization called for greater international support for the world's poorest nations, particularly to help them build productive capacity and physical infrastructure, foster technological learning and innovation and mainstream trade into their development strategies. Inclusive globalization called for increased voice and participation for the poorest countries in multilateral forums and open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral financial, monetary and trading systems. Sustained and inclusive globalization required broader policy space for those countries and greater ownership by them of their national development.

95. **Ms. Fakhr-uz-Zaman** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that many developing countries, especially the least developed among them, remained marginalized in the rapidly globalizing world economy. Consequently, the benefits of globalization were unevenly shared and its costs were unevenly distributed.

96. Developing countries must have the policy space crucial for devising the national policies and strategies to achieve sustainable development, for which each country bore the primary responsibility. National efforts should be supported by an enabling international environment and developing countries must be assured greater voice and participation in international economic decision-making and norm-setting. There was therefore an urgent need for continuing efforts to reform the international financial architecture, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

97. The United Nations should play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and in ensuring coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community. To that end, coordination within the United Nations system must be strengthened, in close cooperation with all multilateral financial, trade and development institutions. The United Nations system could help identify best practices and tools to help strengthen developing countries' institutional capacity effectively to cope with the implications of external macroeconomic and trade policies for their development strategies.

98. With regard to science and technology for development, restraints on access to technology, in particular advanced technologies that could facilitate progress in such areas as agriculture, health, energy, trade, water and environmental protection, were a major problem for developing countries. Building on the decisions adopted at the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit on the Information Society, restrictions on technology transfer and acquisition should be revised. Incentives should be provided for research, including by the private sector, on the problems of the poor, which currently attracted only 10 per cent of research and development expenditure.

99. As to the question of preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin, the Group of 77 and China invited the States parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption to implement the decisions adopted at the inaugural session of the Conference of the Parties, particularly the initiatives on asset recovery and the provision of technical assistance and support for capacity-building. Developing and developed countries alike should seek creative ways to cooperate on asset recovery issues, and he looked forward to progress in that regard at the second session of the Conference of the Parties.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.